

THE  
Double-Dealer,  
A  
COMEDY.

Acted at the  
*THEATRE ROYAL,*  
By Their Majesties Servants.

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Written by Mr. CONGREVE.

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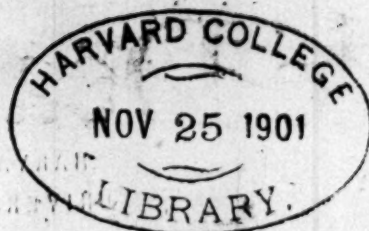
*Interdum sæpius, & vocem Comædia tollit.*

Hor. Ar. Po.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for Jacob Tonson, at the Judges-Head near  
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Pierce fund.

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To the Right Honourable  
**Charles Mountague,**  
ONE OF THE  
Lords of the *TREASURY*.

S I R,

**I** Heartily wish this Play were as perfect as I intended it, that it might be more worthy your acceptance; and that my Dedication of it to you, might be more becoming that Honour and Esteem which I, with every Body, who are so fortunate as to know you, have for you. It had your Countenance when yet unknown; and now it is made publick, it wants your Protection.

And give me leave, without any Flattery to you, or Vanity in my self, to tell my Illiterate Criticks, as an answer to their Impotent Objections, that they have found fault with that, which has been pleasing to you. This Play in relation to my concern for its Reputation, succeeded before it was Acted, for thro' your early Patronage it had an audience of several Persons of the first Rank

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

both in Wit and Quality ; and their allowance of it, was a Consequence of your approbation. Therefore if I really wish it might have had a more popular reception ; it is not at all in consideration of my self ; but because I wish well, and would gladly contribute to the benefit of the Stage, and diversion of the Town. They were (not long since) so kind to a very imperfect Comedy of mine, that I thought my self justly indebted to them all my endeavours for an entertainment that might merit some little of that Applause, which they were so lavish of, when I thought I had no Title to it. But I find they are to be treated cheaply, and I have been at an unnecessary expence.

I would not have any Body imagine, that I think this Play without its Faults, for I am Conscious of several, (and ready to own 'em ; but it shall be to those who are able to find 'em out.) I confess I design'd (whatever Vanity or Ambition occasion'd that design) to have written a true and regular Comedy, but I found it an undertaking which put me in mind of — *Sudet multum, frustra que laboret ausus idem.* And now to make amends for the vanity of such a design, I do confess both the attempt, and the imperfect performance. Yet I must take the boldness to say, I have not miscarried in the whole ; for the Mechanical part of it is perfect. That, I may say with as little vanity, as a Builder may say he has built

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

a House according to the Model laid down before him ; or a Gardiner that he has set his Flowers in a knot of such or such a Figure. I design'd the Moral first, and to that Moral I invented the Fable, and do not know that I have borrow'd one hint of it any where. I made the Plot as strong as I could, because it was single, and I made it single, because I would avoid confusion, and was resolved to preserve the three Unities of the Drama, which I have visibly done to the utmost severity. This is what I ought not to observe upon my self ; but the Ignorance and Malice of the greater part of the Audience is such, that they would make a Man turn Herald to his own Play, and Blazon every Character. However, Sir, this Discourse is very impertinent to you, whose Judgment, much better can discern the Faults, than I can excuse them ; and whose good Nature, like that of a Lover, will find out those hidden Beauties (if there are any such) which it would be great immodesty in me to discover. I think I don't speak improperly when I call you a *Queen* of Poetry ; for it is very well known she has been your kind Mistress to you ; she has not deny'd you the least Favour ; you have enjoy'd her, and she has been fruitful in a most Beautiful Issue ——— If I break off abruptly here, I hope every Body will understand that it is to avoid a Commendation, which, as it is your due, would be most easie for me to pay, and too troublesome for you to receive.

I.

### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

I have since the Acting of this Play hearkned after the Objections which have been made to it; for I was Conscious where a true Critick might have put me upon my defence. I was prepared for their Attack; and am pretty confident I could have vindicated some parts, and excused others; and where there were any plain Miscarriages, I would most ingenuously have confess'd 'em. But I have not heard any thing said sufficient to provoke an Answer. (Some little snarling and barking there has been, but I don't know one well-mouth'd Curr that has opened at all.) That, which looks most, like an Objection, does not relate in particular to this Play, but to all or most that ever have been written; and that is Soliloquy. Therefore I will answer it, not only for my own sake, but to save others the trouble, to whom it may hereafter be Objected.

I grant, that for a Man to Talk to himself, appears absurd and unnatural; and indeed it is so in most Cases; but the circumstances which may attend the occasion, make great alteration. It oftentimes happens to a Man, to have designs which require him to himself and in their Nature, cannot admit of Confidence. Such, for certain, is all Villany and other less mischievous intentions may be very improper to be Communicated to a second Person. In such a case therefore the Audience must observe, whether the Person upon the Stage takes any notice of them  
at

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

at all, or no. For if he supposes any one to be by, when he talks to himself, it is monstrous and ridiculous to the last degree. Nay, not only in this case, but in any part of a Play, if there is expressed any knowledge of an Audience, it is insufferable. But otherwise when a Man in Soliloquy reasons with himself, and *Pro's* and *Con's*, and weighs all his Designs: We ought not to imagine that this Man either talks to us, or to himself; he is only thinking, and thinking such Matter, as were inexcusable Folly in him to speak. But because we are conceal'd Spectators of the Plot in agitation; and the Poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole Mystery of his Contrivance; he is willing to inform us of this Persons Thoughts, and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of Speech, no other better way being yet invented for the Communication of Thought.

Another very wrong Objection has been made by some who have not taken leisure to distinguish the Characters. The Hero of the Play as they are pleas'd to call him, (meaning *Mellefont*) is a Gull, and made a Fool, and cheated. Is every Man a Gull and a Fool that is so? At that rate I'm afraid the two Classes of Men, will be reduc'd to one, and the Knaves themselves be at a loss to justify their Title: But if an Open-hearted Honest Man, who has an entire Confidence in one whom he takes to be his Friend, and whom

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

whom he has obliged to be so ; and who (to confirm him in his Opinion) in all appearance, and upon several tryals has been so : If this Man be deceived by the Treachery of the other ; must he of necessity commence Fool immediately, only because the other has proved a Villain ? Ay, but there was Caution given to *Mellefont* in the first Act by his Friend *Careless*. Of what Nature was that Caution ? Only to give the Audience some light into the Character of *Maskwell*, before his appearance ; and not to convince *Mellefont* of his Treachery ; for that was more than *Careless* was then able to do : He never knew *Maskwell* guilty of any Villany ; he was only a sort of Man which he did not like. As for his suspecting his Familiarity with my Lady *Touchwood* : Let 'em examine the Answer that *Mellefont* makes him, and compare it with the Conduct of *Maskwell's* Character through the Play.

I would have 'em again look into the Character of *Maskwell*, before they accuse any Body of weakness for being deceiv'd by him. For upon summing up the enquiry into this Objection, find they have only mistaken Cunning in one Character, for Folly in another.

But there is one thing at which I am more concerned than all the false Criticisms that are made upon me ; and that is, some of the Ladies are offended : I am heartily sorry for it, for I declare I would rather disoblige all the Criticks  
in

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

in the World, than one of the Fair Sex: They are concerned that I have represented some Women Vicious and Affected: How can I help it? It is the Business of a Comick Poet to paint the Vices and Follies of Humane kind; and there are but two Sexes that I know, *viz.* Men, and Women, which have a Title to Humanity: And if I leave one half of them out, the Work will be imperfect. I should be very glad of an opportunity to make my Complement to those Ladies who are offended: But they can no more expect it in a Comedy, than to be Tickled by a Surgeon, when he's letting 'em Blood. They who are Virtuous or Discreet, I'm sure cannot be offended, for such Characters as these distinguish them, and make their Beauties more shining and observ'd: And they who are of the other kind, may nevertheless pass for such, by seeming not to be displeased, or touched with the Satyr of this *Comedy*. Thus have they also wrongfully accused me of doing them a prejudice, when I have in reality done them a Service.

I have heard some whispering, as if they intended to accuse this Play of Smuttiness and Bawdy: But I declare I took a particular care to avoid it, and if they find any in it, it is of their own making, for I did not design it to be so understood. But to avoid my saying any thing upon a Subject, which has been so admirably handled before, and for their better instruction,

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

I earnestly recommend to their perusal, the Epistle Dedicatory before the *Plain-Dealer*.

You will pardon me, Sir, for the freedom I take of making Answers to other People, in an Epistle which ought wholly to be sacred to you: But since I intend the Play to be so too, I hope I may take the more liberty of Justifying it, where it is in the right. / I hear a great many of the Fools are angry at me, and I am glad of it; for I Writ at them, not to 'em. This is a bold confession, and yet I don't think I shall disoblige one Person by it; for no Body can take it to himself, without owning the *Character*.

I must now, Sir, declare to the World, how kind you have been to my Endeavours; for in regard of what was well meant, you have excused what was ill perform'd, I beg you would continue the same Method in your acceptance of this Dedication. I know no other way of making a return to that *Charity* you shew'd, in protecting an Infant, but by Enrolling it in your Service, now that it is of Age and come into the World. Therefore be pleas'd to accept of this as an Acknowledgement of the Favour you have shewn me, and an earnest of the real Service and Gratitude of,

S I R,

Your Most Obliged

Humble Servant

*William Congreve.*

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To my Dear Friend  
**Mr. Congreve,**

On His COMEDY, call'd,  
**The Double-Dealer.**

**W**ELL then; the promis'd hour is come  
at last;  
The present Age of Wit obscures the past:  
Strong were our Syres; and as they Fought they Writ,  
Conqu'ring with force of Arms, and dint of Wit;  
Theirs was the Gyant Race, before the Flood;  
And thus, when Charles Return'd, our Empire stood.  
Like Janus he the stubborn Soil manur'd,  
With Rules of Husbandry the rankness cur'd:  
Tam'd us to manners, when the Stage was rude;  
And boistrous English Wit, with Art indu'd.  
Our Age was cultivated thus at length;  
But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength.  
Our Builders were, with want of Genius, curst;  
The second Temple was not like the first:

TO MR. CONGREVE,

*Till You, the best Vitruvius, come at length;  
Our Beauties equal; but excel our strength.  
Firm Dorique Pillars found Your solid Base :  
The Fair Corinthian Crowns the higher Space ;  
Thus all below is Strength, and all above is Grace.  
In easie Dialogue is Fletcher's Praise :  
He mov'd the mind, but had not power to raise.  
Great Johnson did by strength of Judgment please :  
Yet doubling Fletcher's Force, he wants his Ease.  
In differing Talents both adorn'd their Age ;  
One for the Study, t'other for the Stage.  
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,  
One match'd in Judgment, both o'er-match'd in Wit.  
In Him all Beauties of this Age we see ;  
Etherege his Courtship, Southern's Purity ;  
The Satire, Wit, and Strength of Manly Witcherly.  
All this in blooming Youth you have Atchiev'd ;  
Now are your foil'd Contemporaries griev'd ;  
So much the sweetness of your manners move,  
We cannot envy you because we Love.  
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw  
A Beardless Consul made against the Law,  
And joyn his Suffrage to the Votes of Rome ;  
Though He with Hannibal was overcome,  
Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's Fame ;  
And Scholar to the Youth he taught, became.*

*Oh that your Brows my Laurel had sustain'd,  
Well had I been Depos'd, if You had reign'd!*

On the Double-Dealer.

*The Father had descended for the Son ;  
For only You are lineal to the Throne.  
Thus when the State one Edward did depose ;  
A Greater Edward in his room arose.  
But now, not I, but Poetry is curs'd ;  
For Tom the Second reigns like Tom the first.  
But let 'em not mistake my Patron's part ;  
Nor call his Charity their own desert.  
Yet this I Prophecy ; Thou shalt be seen,  
(Tho' with some short Parenthesis between :)  
Higgl on the Throne of Wit ; and seated there,  
Not mine (that's little) but thy Lawrel wear.  
Thy first attempt an early promise made ;  
That early promise this has more than paid.  
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,  
That Your least Praise, is to be Regular.  
Time, Place, and Action, may with pains be wrought,  
But Genius must be born ; and never can be taught.  
This is Your Portion ; this Your Native Store ;  
Heav'n that but once was Prodigal before,  
To Shakespeare gave as much ; she cou'd not give  
him more.*

*Maintain Your Post : That's all the Fame You need ;  
For 'tis impossible you shou'd proceed.  
Already I am worn with Cares and Age ;  
And just abandoning th' Ungrateful Stage :  
Unprofitably kept at Heav'n's expence,  
I live a Rent-charge on his Providence :*

*But*

TO MR. CONGREGUE, &c.

*But You, whom ev'ry Muse and Grace adorn,  
Whom I foresee to better Fortune born,  
Be kind to my Remains ; and oh defend,  
Against Your Judgment Your departed Friend !  
Let not the Insulting Foe my Fame pursue ;  
But shade those Laurels which descend to You :  
And take for Tribute what these Lines express :  
You merit more ; nor cou'd my Love do less.*

John Dryden.

Prologue

# PROLOGUE

Spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle.

**M**OORE, have this way (as Story tells) to know  
Whether their Brats are truly got, or no;  
Into the Sea, the New-born Babe is thrown,  
There, as instinct directs, to Swim, or Drown.  
A Barbarous Device, to try if Spouse,  
Have kept Religiously her Nuptial Vows!

Such are the Tryals, Poets make of Plays:  
Only they trust to more inconstant Seas;  
So, does our Author, this his Child commit  
To the Tempestuous Mercy of the Pit,  
To know, if it be truly born of Wit.

Criticks awant; for you are Fish of Prey,  
And feed like Sharks, upon an Infant Play.  
Be ev'ry Monster of the Deep away;  
Let's have a fair Tryal, and a clear Sea.

Let Nature work, and do not Damn to soon,  
For Life will struggle long, 'ere it sink down:  
Let it at least rise thrice, before it Drown.  
Let us consider, had it been our Fate,  
Thus hardly to be prov'd Legitimate!  
I will not say, we'd all in danger been,  
Were each to suffer for his Mothers Sin;  
But by my Troth I cannot avoid thinking,  
How nearly some Good Men, might have scap'd Sinking.  
But Heav'n be prais'd, this Custom is confin'd  
Alone to the Offspring of the Muses kind:  
Our Christian Cuckolds are more bent to pity;  
I know not one Moor-Husband in the City.  
Pth' Good Man's Arms, the Chopping Bastard thrives,  
For he thinks all his own, that is his Wives.

Whatever Fate is for this Play design'd,  
The Poet's sure he shall some comfort find:  
For if his Muse has play'd him false, the worst  
That can befall him, is, to be Divorc'd;  
You Husbands Judge, if that, be to be Cur'd.

Persons

# Personæ Dramatis.

## Men.

By

*Maskwell*, A Villain; pretended Friend to *Mellefont*, Gallant to Lady *Touchwood*, and in Love with *Cynthia*. } Mr. Betterton.

*Lord Touchwood*, Uncle to *Mellefont*. Mr. Kynaston.

*Mellefont*, Promised to, and in Love with *Cynthia*. Mr. Williams.

*Careless*, His Friend. Mr. Alexander.

*Lord Froth*, A Solemn Coxcomb. Mr. Bowman.

*Brisk*, A Pert Coxcomb. Mr. Powell.

*Sir Paul Plyant*, An Uxorius, Foolish, old Knight; Brother to Lady *Touchwood*, and Father to *Cynthia*. } Mr. Dogget.

## Women.

By

Lady *Touchwood*, In Love with *Mellefont*. Mrs. Barrey.

*Cynthia*, Daughter to *Sir Paul* by a former Wife, promised to *Mellefont*. } Mrs. Bracegirdle.

Lady *Froth*, A great Cocquet; pretender to Poetry, Wit, and Learning. } Mrs. Mountfort.

Lady *Plyant*, Insolent to her Husband, and false to any Pretender. } Mrs. Leigh.

*Chaplain*, *Boy*, *Footmen*, and *Attendants*.

The SCENE, A Gallery in the Lord *Touchwood*'s House.

The Time, from Five a Clock to Eight in the Evening.

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THE  
Double - Dealer.  
A  
COMEDY.

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ACT I. SCENE I.

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*A Gallery in the Ld. Touchwood's House, with  
Chambers adjoyning.*

*Enter Careless, Crossing the Stage, with his Hat, Gloves, and  
Sword in his Hands; as just risen from Table: Mellefont  
following him.*

*Mel.* **N**ED, Ned, whither so fast? What, turn'd  
fincher! Why, you wo' not leave us?  
*Care.* Where are the Women? Pox I'm  
weary of guzling, and begin to think them  
the better Company.

*Mel.* Then thy Reason staggers, and thou'rt almost  
drunk.

B .

*Care.*

*The Double-Dealer.*

*Care.* No faith, but your Fools grow noisy—— and if a man must endure the noise of words without Sense, I think the Women have the more Musical Voices, and become Nonfence better.

*Mel.* Why, they are at that end of the Gallery; retired to their Tea, and Scandal; according to their Antient Custome, after Dinner. —— But I made a pretence of following you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this Evening.

*Care.* And here's this Cox-Comb most Critically come to interrupt you.

*Enter Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Boys, Boys, Lads, where are you? What do you give ground? Mortgage for a Bottle, ha? *Careless*, this is your trick; you're always spoiling Company by leaving it.

*Care.* And thou art always spoiling Company by coming into 't.

*Brisk.* Pooh, ha, ha, ha, I know you envy me. Spite, proud spite, by the Gods! and burning envy. —— I'll be judged by *Mellefont* here, who gives and takes Rail-lery better, you or I. Pox, Man, when I say you spoil Company by leaving it, I mean you leave no body for the Company to Laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha? *Mellefont*.

*Mel.* O' my word, *Brisk*, that was a home thrust; you have silenc'd him.

*Brisk.* Oh, my dear *Mellefont*, let me perish, if thou art not the Soul of Conversation, the very Essence of Wit, and Spirit of Wine, — the Deuce take me if there were three good things said; or one, understood, since thy Amputation from the body of our Society. —— He, I think that's pretty and Metaphorical enough: I' Gad I could not have said it out of thy Company. —— *Careless*, ha?

*Care.*

## The Double-Dealer.

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*Care.* Hum, ay, what is't?

*Brisk.* O, *Mon Cœur*! What is't! nay gad I'll punish you for want of Apprehension: The Deuce take me if I tell you.

*Mel.* No, no, hang him, he has no taste, — but dear *Brisk* excuse me, I have a little business.

*Care.* Prithee get thee gone; thou seest we are serious.

*Mel.* We'll come immediately, if you'll but go in, and keep up good Humour and Sense in the Company, prithee do, they'll fall asleep else.

*Brisk.* I'gad so they will—— well I will, I will, Gad you shall Command me from the *Zenith* to the *Nadir*.—— But the Deuce take me if I say a good thing till you come.—— But prithee dear Rogue, make haste, prithee make haste, I shall burst else.—— And yonder your Uncle my Lord *Touchwood* swears, he'll Disinherit you, and Sir *Paul Pliant* threatens to disclaim you for a Son-in-Law, and my Lord *Froth* won't Dance at your Wedding to Morrow; nor the Deuce take me, I won't Write your Epithalamium—— and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

*Mel.* Well, I'll speak but three words, and follow you.

*Brisk.* Enough, enough, *Careless*, bring your Apprehension along with you. [Exit.

*Care.* Pert Cox-Comb.

*Mel.* Faith 'tis a good natur'd Cox-Comb, and has very Entertaining follies— you must be more humane to him; at this Juncture it will do me Service.—— I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate; tho' Patience purchase folly, and Attention be paid with noise: There are times when Sense may be unseasonable, as well as Truth. Prithee do thou wear none to day; but allow *Brisk* to have Wit, that thou may'st seem a Fool.

*Care.* Why, how now, why this extravagant proposition?

*Mel.* O, I would have no room for serious design; for I am Jealous of a Plot. I would have Noise and Impertinence keep my Lady *Touchwood's* Head from Working: For

Hell is not more busie than her Brain, nor contains more Devils, than that Imaginations.

*Care.* I thought your fear of her had been over—— is not to Morrow appointed for your Marriage with *Cynthia*, and her Father Sir *Paul Plyant*, come to settle the Writings, this day, on purpose?

*Mel.* True, but you shall judge whether I have not reason to be allarm'd. None besides you, and *Maskwell*, are acquainted with the Secret of my Aunt *Touchwood's* violent Passion for me. Since my first refusal of her Addresses, she has endeavour'd to do me all ill Offices with my Uncle; yet has managed 'em with that subtilty, that to him they have born the face of kindness; while her Malice, like a Dark Lanthorn, onely shone upon me, where it was directed. Still it gave me less perplexity to prevent the success of her displeasure, than to avoid the importunities of her Love; and of two evils, I thought my self favour'd in her aversion: But whether urged by her despair, and the short prospect of time she saw, to accomplish her designs; whether the hopes of her revenge, or of her Love, terminated in the view of this my Marriage with *Cynthia*, I know not; but this Morning she surpriz'd me in my Bed.——

*Care.* Was there ever such a Fury! 'tis well Nature has not put into her Sexes power to Ravish.—— Well, bless us! Proceed. What follow'd?

*Mel.* What at first amaz'd me; for I look'd to have seen her in all the Transports of a slighted and revengful Woman: But when I expected Thunder from her Voice, and Lightning in her Eyes; I saw her melted into Tears, and hush'd into a Sigh. It was long before either of us spoke, Passion had ty'd her Tongue, and Amazement mine.—— In short, the Consequence was thus, she omitted nothing, that the most violent Love could urge, or tender words express; which when she saw had no effect; but still I pleaded Honour and nearness of Blood to my Uncle; then came the Storm I fear'd at first: For starting from my Bed-side like a Fury, she flew to my Sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or her self a mischief: having disarm'd her; in a gust of Passi-

on she left me, and in a resolution, confirm'd by a Thousand Curses, not to close her Eyes, till she had seen my ruin.

*Care.* Exquisite Woman! But what the Devil does she think, thou hast no more Sense, than to get an Heir upon her Body to Disinherit thy self: for as I take it this Settlement upon you, is, with a Proviso, that your Uncle have no Children.

*Mel.* It is so. Well, the Service that you are to do me, will be a Pleasure to your self; I must get you to engage my Lady *Pliant* all this Evening, that my Pious Aunt may not work her to her Interest. And if you chance to secure her to your self, you may incline her to mine. She's handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has Sense, and has an old fond Husband.

*Care.* I confess a very fair Foundation, for a Lover to build upon.

*Mel.* For my Lord *Froth*, he and his Wife will be sufficiently taken up, with admiring one another, and *Brisk's* Gallantry, as they call it. I'll observe my Uncle my self; and *Jack Maskwell* has promised me, to watch my Aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for Sir *Paul*, my wife Father-in-Law that is to be, my Dear *Cynthia* has such a share in his Fatherly fondness, he would scarce make her a Moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

*Care.* So, you have Mann'd your Works: But I wish you may not have the weakest Guard, where the Enemy is strongest.

*Mel.* *Maskwell*, you mean; prithee why should you suspect him?

*Care.* Faith I cannot help it, you know I never lik'd him; I am a little Superstitious in Physiognomy.

*Mel.* He has Obligations of Gratitude, to bind him to me; his Dependance upon my Uncle is through my means.

*Care.* Upon your Aunt, you mean.

*Mel.* My Aunt!

*Care.*

## The Double-Dealer.

*Care.* I'm mistaken if there be not a Familiarity between them, you do not suspect: For all her Passion for you.

*Mel.* Pooh, pooh, nothing in the World but his design to do me Service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

*Care.* Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken; but, your Aunts Aversion in her Revenge, cannot be any way so effectually shown, as in bringing forth a Child to Disinherit you. She is Handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton. *Maskwell* is Flesh and Blood at best, and opportunities between them are frequent. His Affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his Interest, that, you have transplanted; and should it take Root in my Lady, I don't see what you can expect from the Fruit.

*Mel.* I confess the Consequence is visible, were your suspicions just,—— but see the Company is broke up, let's meet 'em.

*Enter Lord Touchwood, Lord Froth, Sir Paul Pliant,  
and Brisk.*

*Ld. Touch.* Out upon't, Nephew—— leave your Father-in-Law, and me, to maintain our ground against Young People.

*Mel.* I beg your Lordships Pardon.—— We were just returning.——

*Sir Paul.* Were you, Son? Gadsbud much better as it is—— good, strange! I swear I'm almost Tipsy—— t'other Bottle would have been too powerful for me,—— as sure as can be it would.—— we wanted your Company, but Mr. *Brisk*—— where is he? I swear and vow, he's a most facetious Person—— and the best Company.—— And, my Lord *Froth*, your Lordship is so merry a Man, he, he, he.

*Ld. Froth.* O foy, Sir *Paul*, what do you mean? Merry! O, Barbarous! I'd as lieve you call'd me Fool.

Sir

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*Sir Paul.* Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when *Mr. Brisk* Jokes, your Lordships Laugh does so become you, he, he, he.

*Ld. Froth.* Ridiculous! *Sir Paul* you're strangely mistaken, I find Champagne is powerful. I assure you, *Sir Paul*, I Laugh at no bodies Jest but my own, or a Ladies; I assure you, *Sir Paul*.

*Brisk.* How? how, my Lord? What, affront my Wit! Let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be Laugh'd at?

*Ld. Froth.* O foy, don't misapprehend me, I don't say so, for I often smile at your Conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a Man of Quality, than to Laugh; 'Jesu, 'tis such a Vulgar Expression of the Passion! every body can Laugh. Then especially to Laugh at the Jest of an Inferiour Person, or when any body else of the same Quality does not Laugh with him. Ridiculous! To be pleased with what pleases the Croud! Now when I Laugh, I always Laugh alone.

*Brisk.* I suppose that's because you Laugh at your own Jests, I gad, ha, ha, ha.

*Ld. Froth.* He, he, I swear tho', your Raillery provokes me to a smile.

*Brisk.* Ay, my Lord, it's a sign I hit you in the Teeth, if you show 'em.

*Ld. Froth.* He, he, he, I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

*Care.* I find a Quibble bears more sway in your Lordships Face, than a Jest.

*Ld. Touch.* *Sir Paul*, if you please we'll retire to the Ladys, and Drink a Dish of Tea, to settle our Heads.

*Sir Paul.* With all my heart. — *Mr. Brisk* you'll come to us, — or call me when you're going to Joke, I'll be ready to Laugh incontinently.

[Exit *Ld. Touch.* and *Sir Paul*.]

*Mel.* But does your Lordship never see Comedies?

*Ld. Froth.* O yes, sometimes, — but I never Laugh.

*Mel.*

*Mel.* No?

*Ld. Froth.* Oh, no.— Never Laugh indeed, Sir.

*Care.* No, why what d'ee go there for?

*Ld. Froth.* To distinguish my self from the Commonalty, and mortify the Poets; the Fellows grow so Conceited, when any of their foolish Wit prevails upon the side Boxes.— I swear, — he, he, he, I have often constrained my Inclinations to Laugh.— He, he, he, to avoid giving them encouragement.

*Mel.* You are Cruel to your self, my Lord, as well as Malicious to them.

*Ld. Froth.* I confess, I did my self some violence at first, but now I think I have Conquer'd it.

*Brisk.* Let me perish, my Lord, but there is something very particular and novel in the Humour; 'tis true, it makes against Wit, and I'm sorry for some Friends of mine that Write, but — I gad, I love to be malicious. — Nay, Deuce take me, there's Wit in't too — and Wit must be foil'd by Wit; cut a Diamond with a Diamond; no other way, I gad.

*Ld. Froth.* Oh, I thought you would not be long, before you found out the Wit.

*Care.* Wit! In what? Where the Devil's the Wit, in not Laughing when a Man has a mind to't.

*Brisk.* O Lord, why can't you find it out? — Why there 'tis, in the not Laughing — don't you Apprehend me? — My Lord, *Careless*, is a very honest Fellow, but harkee, — you understand me. Somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so. — Why I'll tell you now, suppose now, you come up to me — nay, prithee *Careless* be instructed. Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me, holding your sides, and Laughing as if you would bepils your self — I look grave, and ask the cause of this Immoderate Mirth. — You Laugh on still, and are not able to tell me — still I look grave, not so much as smile. —

*Care.* Smile, no, what the Devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you?

*Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Pshaw, pshaw, prithee don't interrupt me.—— But I tell you, you shall tell me—— at last.—— But it shall be a great while first.

*Care.* Well, but prithee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

*Brisk.* Well then, you tell me, some good Jest, or very Witty thing, Laughing all the while as if you were ready to die—— and I hear it, and look thus.—— Would not you be disappointed?

*Care.* No; for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

*Ld. Froth.* O foy, Mr. *Careless*, all the World allow Mr. *Brisk* to have Wit; my Wife says, he has a great deal. I hope you think her a Judge?

*Brisk.* Poooh, my Lord, his Voice goes for nothing.—— I can't tell how to make him Apprehend,—— take it t'other way. Suppose I say a witty thing to you?

*Care.* Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

*Mel.* Let him alone, *Brisk*, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

*Brisk.* I'm sorry for him, Deuce take me.

*Mel.* Shall we go to the Ladies, my Lord?

*Ld. Froth.* With all my heart, methinks we are a Solitude without 'em.

*Mel.* Or, what say you, to another Bottle of Champagne?

*Ld. Froth.* O, for the Universe, not a drop more I beseech you, O Intemperate! I have a flushing in my Face already.

[*Takes out a Pocket-Glass, and looks in it.*]

*Brisk.* Let me see, let me see, my Lord, I broke my Glass that was in the Lid of my Snuff-Box. Hum! Deuce take me, I have encourag'd a Pimple here too.

[*Takes the Glass and looks.*]

*Ld. Froth.* Then you must mortifie him, with a Patch; my Wife shall supply you. Come, Gentlemen, *allons.*

[*Excunt.*]

*Enter Lady Touchwood, and Maskwell.*

*L. Touch.* I'll hear no more.—— Y' are False and Ungrateful; come, I know you false.

*Mas.* I have been frail, I confess, Madam, for your Ladyships Service.

*L. Touch.* That I should trust a Man, whom I had known betray his Friend!

*Mas.* What Friend have I betray'd? Or to Whom?

*L. Touch.* Your fond Friend *Mellefont*, and to me; can you deny it?

*Mas.* I do not.

*L. Touch.* Have you not wrong'd my Lord, who has been a Father to you in your wants, and given you being? have you not wrong'd him in the highest manner, in his Bed?

*Mas.* With your Ladyships help, and for your Service, as I told you before. I can't deny that neither.—— Any thing more, Madam?

*L. Touch.* More! Audacious Villain. O what's more, is most my Shame, —— have you not Dishonoured me?

*Mas.* No, that I deny; for I never told in all my Life: So that Accusation's Answer'd; on to the next.

*L. Touch.* Death, do you dally with my Passion? Insolent Devil! But have a care, —— provoke me not; For, by the Eternal Fire, you shall not scape my Vengeance. —— Calm Villain! How unconcern'd he stands, Confessing Treachery and Ingratitude! Is there Vice more black! —— O I have Excuses, Thousands for my Faults; Fire in my Temper, Passions in my Soul, apt to every provocation; oppress'd at once with Love, and with Despair. But a sedate, a thinking Villain, whose Black Blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear? one, who is no more moved with the reflection of his Crimes, than of his Face; but walks unstartled from the Mirrour, and streight forgets the hideous form.

*Mas.*

## The Double-Dealer.

II

*Maf.* Will you be in Temper, Madam? I would not talk, not to be heard. I have been [*She Walks about Disorder'd.*] a very great Rogue for your sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a Rogue still, to do you Service; and you are flinging Conscience and Honour in my Face, to rebate my Inclinations. How am I to behave my self? You know I am your Creature, my Life and Fortune in your power; to disoblige you, brings me certain Ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a Traytor to my self: I don't pretend to Honesty, because you know I am a Rascal: But I would convince you, from the necessity of my being firm to you.

*L. Touch.* Necessity, Impudence! Can no Gratitude incline you, no Obligations touch you? Have not my Fortune, and my Person, been subjected to your Pleasure? Were you not in the nature of a Servant, and have not I in effect made you Lord of all, of me, and of my Lord? Where is that humble Love, the Languishing, that Adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged?

*Maf.* Fix'd, Rooted in my Heart, whence nothing can remove 'em, yet you.—

*L. Touch.* Yet, what yet?

*Maf.* Nay, Misconceive me not, Madam, when I say I have had a Generous, and a Faithful Passion, which you had never favour'd, but through Revenge and Policy.

*L. Touch.* Ha!

*Maf.* Look you, Madam, we are alone,—— pray contain your self, and hear me. You know you Lov'd your Nephew, when I first Sigh'd for you; I quickly found it, an Argument that I Lov'd; for with that Art you veil'd your Passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but Jealous Eyes. This discovery made me bold; I confess it; for by it, I thought you in my Power. Your Nephew's Scorn of you, added to my hopes; I watch'd the Occasion, and took you, just Repulsed by him, warm at once with Love and Indignation; your

Disposition, my Arguments, and happy Opportunity, accomplish'd my Design; I prest the yielding Minute, and was blest. How, I have Lov'd you since, Words have not shown, then how should Words express.

*L. Touch.* Well, mollifying Devil! ——— And have I not met your Love with forward Fire?

*Maf.* Your Zeal I grant was Ardent, but misplac'd; there was Revenge in view; that Womans Idol had defil'd the Temple of the God, and Love was made a Mock-Worship, ——— a Son and Heir, would have edg'd Young *Mellefont* upon the brink of Ruin, and left him nought but you to catch at for Prevention.

*L. Touch.* Again, provoke me! Do you wind me like a Larum, only to rouse my own still'd Soul for your Diversi-on? Confusion!

*Maf.* Na, Madam, I'm gone, if you Relapse, ——— what needs this? I say nothing but what your self, in open hours of Love, have told me. Why should you deny it? Nay, how can you? Is not all this present Heat owing to the same Fire? Do you not Love him still? How have I this day Offended you, but in not breaking off his Match with *Cynthia*? Which e're to Morrow shall be done, ——— had you but Patience.

*L. Touch.* How, what said you *Maskwell* ——— another Caprice, to unwind my temper.

*Maf.* By heaven, no; I am your Slave, the Slave of all your Pleasures; and will not rest till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

*L. Touch.* O' *Maskwell*, in Vain I do disguise me from thee, thou know'st me, know'st the very inmost Windings and Recesses of my Soul. ——— Oh *Mellefont*! I burn; Married to Morrow! Despair strikes me. Yet my Soul knows I hate him too: Let him but once be mine, and next immediate Ruin seize him.

*Maf.* Compose your self, You shall Enjoy and Ruin him too, ——— Will that please you?

*L. Touch.* How, how? Thou Dear, thou precious Villain, how?

*Maf.*

## *The Double-Dealer.*

13

*Maf.* You have already been tampering with my Lady Plyant?

*L. Touch.* I have: She is ready for any Impression I think fit.

*Maf.* She must be thoroughly perswaded, that *Mellefont* Loves her.

*L. Touch.* She is so Credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can perswade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first Converseing with *Mellefont*, will convince her of the contrary.

*Maf.* I know it. ——— I don't depend upon it. ——— But it will prepare some thing else; and gain us leasure to lay a stronger Plot: if I gain a little time, I shall not want Contrivance.

*One Minute, gives Invention to Destroy,  
What, to Rebuild, will a whole Age Employ.*

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the first Act.

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## ACT II. SCENE I.

*Enter Lady Froth and Cynthia.*

*Cynthia.* **I**Ndeed, Madam! Is it Possible your Ladyship could have been so much in Love?

*L. Froth.* I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for Three Weeks together.

*Cynt.* Prodigious! I wonder, want of sleep, and so much Love, and so much Wit as your Ladyship has, did not turn your Brain.

*L. Froth.* O my Dear *Cynthia*, you must not rally your Friend,—— but really, as you say, I wonder too,—— but then I had a way.—— For between you and I, I had Whymfies and Vapours, but I gave them vent.

*Cynt.* How pray, Madam?

*L. Froth.* O I Writ, Writ abundantly,—— do you never Write?

*Cynt.* Write, what?

*L. Froth.* Songs, Elegies, Satyrs, Encomiums, Panegyricks, Lampoons, Plays, or Heroick Poems.

*Cynt.* O Lord, not I, Madam; I'm content to be a Courteous Reader.

*L. Froth.* O Inconsistent! In Love, and not Write! if my Lord and I had been both of your Temper, we had never come together,—— O bless me! What a sad thing would that have been, if my Lord and I should never have met!

*Cynt.* Then neither my Lord and you would ever have met with your Match, on my Conscience.

*L. Froth.* O my Conscience no more we should; thou say'st right—— for sure my Lord *Froth* is as fine a Gentleman, and as much a Man of Quality! Ah! Nothing at all

all of the Common Air, — I think I may say he wants nothing, but a Blue Ribbon and a Star, to make him Shine, the very Phosphorus of our Hemisphere. Do you understand those Two hard Words? If you don't, I'll explain 'em to you.

Cynt. Yes, yes, Madam, I'm not so Ignorant. — At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your Instructions. [Aside.

L. Froth. Nay, I beg your Pardon; but being Derived from the Greek, I thought you might have escap'd the Etymology. — But I'm the more amazed, to find you a Woman of Letters, and not Write! Bless me! how can Mellefont believe you Love him?

Cynt. Why Faith, Madam, he that won't take my Word, shall never have it under my Hand.

L. Froth. I Vow Mellefont's a pretty Gentleman, but Methinks he wants a Manner.

Cynt. A Manner! what's that, Madam?

L. Froth. Some distinguishing Quality, as for example, the Belle-air or Brilliant of Mr. Brisk; the Solemnity, yet Complaisance of my Lord, or something of his own, that should look a little *Jene-say quoysh*; he is too much a Mediocrity, in my mind.

Cynt. He does not indeed affect either pertness, or formality; for which I like him: Here he comes.

L. Froth. And my Lord with him: pray observe the difference.

Enter Lord Froth, Mellefont, Brisk.

Cynt. Impertinent Creature, I could almost be angry with her now. [Aside.

L. Froth. My Lord, I have been telling my dear Cynthia, how much I have been in Love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now; ah! it makes my heart leap, I vow I sigh when I think on't: my dear Lord! ha, ha, ha, do you remember, my Lord? [Squeezes him by

the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.

L. Froth.

*Ld. Froth.* Pleasant Creature! perfectly well, ah! that look, ay, there it is; who could resist! 'twas so my heart was made a Captive first, and ever since 't has been in Love with happy Slavery.

*L. Froth.* O that Tongue, that dear deceitful Tongue! that Charming Softness in your Mien and your Expression, and then your Bow! Good my Lord, bow as you did when I gave you my Picture, here suppose this my Picture——

*[Gives him a Pocket-glass.]*

Pray mind, my Lord; ah! he bows Charmingly; nay, my Lord, you sha'n't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

*[He bows profoundly low, then kisses the Glass.]*

*Ld. Froth.* I saw my self there, and kissed it for your sake.

*L. Froth.* Ah! Gallantry to the last degree——*Mr. Brisk*, you're a Judge; was ever any thing so well-bred as my Lord?

*Brisk.* Never any thing; but your Ladyship, let me perish.

*L. Froth.* O prettily turn'd again; let me die, but you have a great deal of Wit: *Mr. Mellefont*, don't you think *Mr. Brisk* has a World of Wit?

*Mel.* O, yes, Madam.

*Brisk.* O Lord, Madam——

*L. Froth.* An infinite deal!

*Brisk.* O Jesu, Madam——

*L. Froth.* More Wit than any Body.

*Brisk.* I'm everlastingly your humble Servant, Deuce take me, Madam.

*Ld. Froth.* Don't you think us a happy Couple?

*Cynt.* I vow, my Lord, I think you the happiest Couple in the World, for you are not only happy in one another, and when you are together, but happy in your selves, and by your selves.

*Ld. Froth.* I hope *Mellefont* will make a good Husband too.

*Cynt.* 'Tis my Interest to believe he will, my Lord.

*Ld. Froth.*

Ld. Froth. D'e think he'll Love you as well as I do my Wife? I'm afraid not.

Cynt. I believe he'll Love me better.

Ld. Froth. Heavens! that can never be; but why do you think so?

Cynt. Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

Ld. Froth. O your humble Servant for that, dear Madam; well, *Mellefont*, you'll be a happy Creature.

Mel. Ay, my Lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your Lordship has, I shall think my self happy.

Ld. Froth. Ah, that's all.

Brisk. (to Lady Froth) Your Ladyship is in the right; but I'gad I'm wholly turn'd into Satyr. I confess I Write but seldom, but when I do—— keen *Iambicks* I'gad. But my Lord was telling me, your Ladyship has made an Essay toward an Heroick Poem.

L. Froth. Did my Lord tell you? Yes I vow, and the Subject is my Lord's Love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare Swear you won't guesse—— *The Sillibub*, ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Because my Lord's Title's *Froth*, I'gad, ha, ha, ha, Deuce take me very a *Propos* and Surprizing, ha, ha, ha.

L. Froth. He, Ay, is not it?—— and then I call my Lord *Spumoso*; and my self, what d'e think I call my self?

Brisk. *Lactilla* may be,—— 'gad I cannot tell.

L. Froth. *Biddy*, that's all; just my own Name.

Brisk. *Biddy*! I'gad very pretty—— Deuce take me if your Ladyship has not the Art of Surprizing the most naturally in the World,—— I hope you'll make me happy in Communicating the Poem.

L. Froth. O, you must be my Confident, I must ask your Advice.

Brisk. I'm your Humble Servant, let me perish,—— I presume your Ladyship has Read *Bossu*?

L. Froth. O yes, and *Rapine*, and *Dacier* upon *Aristotle* and *Horace*.—— My Lord you must not be Jealous, I'm Communicating all to Mr. Brisk.

Ld. Froth. No, no, I'll allow Mr. Brisk; have you nothing about you to shew him, my Dear?

L. Froth. Yes, I believe I have.—— Mr. Brisk, come

will you go into the next Room? and there I'll shew you all I have.

[Exit L. Froth and Brisk.

Ld. Froth. I'll walk a turn in the Garden, and come to you.

[Exit.

Mel. You're thoughtful, Cynthia?

Cynt. I'm thinking, that tho' Marriage makes Man and Wife One Flesh, it leaves 'em still Two Fools; and they become more Conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only when Two Fools meet, and their follies are oppos'd.

Cynt. Nay, I have known Two Wits meet, and by the opposition of their Wits, render themselves as ridiculous as Fools. 'Tis an odd Game we're going to Play at: What think you of drawing Stakes, and giving over in time?

Mel. No, hang't, that's not endeavouring to Win, because it's possible we may lose; since we have Shuffled and Cutt, let's e'en turn up Trump now.

Cynt. Then I find its like Cards, if either of us have a good Hand, it is an Accident of Fortune.

Mel. No, Marriage is rather like a Game at Bowls, Fortune indeed makes the match, and the Two nearest, and sometimes the Two farthest are together, but the Game depends entirely upon Judgment.

Cynt. Still it is a Game, and Consequently one of us must be a Loser.

Mel. Not at all; only a Friendly Tryal of Skill, and the Winnings to be Shared between us.—— What's here, the Musick!—— Oh, my Lord has promised the Company a New Song, we'll get 'em to give it us by the way.

[Musicians crossing the Stage.

Pray let us have the Favour of you, to practice the Song, before the Company hear it.

### S O N G.

I.

CYNTHIA frowns when e're I Woo her,  
Tet she's vex't if I give over;  
Much she fears I should undo her,  
But much more, to lose her Lover:  
Thus, in doubting, she refuses;  
And not Winning, thus she loses.

*Prithee*

II.

*Prithee Cynthia look behind you,  
Age and Wrinkles will o'ertake you;  
Then too late, desire will find you,  
When the power does forsake you:  
Think, O think o'th' sad Condition,  
To be past, yet wish Fruition.*

*Mal.* You shall have my thanks below.

*[To the Musick, they go out.]*

*Enter Sir Paul Plyant and Lady Plyant.*

*Sir Paul.* Gads bud! I am provoked into a Fermentation, as my Lady *Froth* says; was ever the like read of in Story?

*L. P.* *Sir Paul* have patience, let me alone to rattle him up.

*Sir Paul.* Pray your Ladyship give me leave to be Angry—I'll rattle him up I Warrant you, I'll firk him with a *Certiorari*.

*L. P.* You firk him, I'll firk him my self; pray *Sir Paul* hold you Contented.

*Cynt.* Bless me, what makes my Father in such a Passion!—I never saw him thus before.

*Sir Paul.* Hold your self Contented, my Lady *Plyant*,—I find Passion coming upon me by inspiration, and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

*L. P.* How now! will you be pleased to retire, and——

*Sir Paul.* No marry will I not be pleased, I am pleased to be angry, that's my pleasure at this time.

*Mel.* What can this mean!

*L. P.* Gads my life, the man's Distracted, why how now, who are you? What am I? 'Slidikins can't I govern you? What did I Marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontrollable? Is it fit a Woman of my Spirit, and Conduct, should be contradicted in a matter of this Concern?

*Sir Paul.* It concerns me, and only me;—besides, I'm not to be govern'd at all times. When I am in Tranquility, my Lady *Flyant* shall Command *Sir Paul*; but when I am provoked to fury, I cannot incorporate with Patience and Reason,—as soon may Tygers Match with Tygers, Lambs with Lambs, and every Creature couple with its Foe, as the Poet says.—

*L. P.* He's hot-headed still! 'Tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a Curtain-Lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong Brute.

*Sir Paul.* No, 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a Brute, and have my Head fortifi'd, that I am thus exasperated,—but I will protect my Honour, and yonder is the Violator of my Fame.

*L. P.* 'Tis my Honour that is concern'd, and the violation was intended to me. Your Honour! You have none, but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please—therefore don't provoke me.

*Sir Paul.* Hum, gads bud she says true,—well, my Lady, March on, I will fight under you then: I am convinced, as far as Passion will permit.

[*L. Plyant and Sir Paul come up to Mellefont.*]

*L. P.* Inhuman and Treacherous.

*Sir Paul.* Thou Serpent and first Tempter of Womankind.—

*Cynt.* Bless me! Sir; Madam; what mean you?

*Sir Paul.* *Thy, Thy*, come away *Thy*, touch him not, come hither Girl, go not near him, there's nothing but deceit about him; Snakes are in his Peruke, and the Crocodile of *Nilus* in his Belly, he will eat thee up alive.

*L. P.* Dishonourable, impudent Creature!

*Mel.* For Heaven's sake, Madam, to whom do you direct this Language!

*L. P.* Have I behaved my self with all the decorum, and nicety, befitting the Person of *Sir Paul's* Wife? Have I preserved my Honour as it were in a Snow-House for this three year past? Have I been white and unfulli'd even by *Sir Paul* himself?

*Sir Paul.* Nay, she has been an impenetrable Wife, even to me, that's the truth on't.

*L. P.* Have I, I say, preserv'd my self, like a fair Sheet of Paper, for you to make a Blot upon——

*Sir Paul.* And she shall make a Simile with any Woman in *England*.

*Mel.* I am so amazed, I know not what to speak.

*Sir Paul.* Do you think my Daughter, this pretty Creature; gads bud she's a Wife for a Cherubin! Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a Stalking-Horse, to stand before you, while you take aim at my Wife? Gads bud I was never angry before in my Life, and I'll never be appeased again.

*Mel.* Hell and Damnation! this is my Aunt; such malice can be engendred no where else. [*Aside.*]

*L. P.*

*L. P.* Sir Paul, take *Cynthia* from his sight; leave me to strike him with the remorse of his intended Crime.

*Cynt.* Pray, Sir, stay, hear him, I dare affirm he's innocent.

*Sir P.* Innocent! why heark'ee, come hither *Thy*, heark'ee, I had it from his Aunt, my Sister *Touchwood*,—gadsbud he does not care a Farthing for any thing of thee, but thy Portion, why he's in Love with my Wife; he would have rantalized thee, and made a Cuckold of thy poor Father,—and that would certainly have broke my Heart—I'm sure if ever I should have Horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I should dye of 'em, like any Child, that were cutting his Teeth—I should, indeed, *Thy*—therefore come away; but providence has prevented all, therefore come away, when I bid you.

*Cynt.* I must obey.

[*Ex. Sir Paul, and Cynthia.*]

*L. P.* O, such a thing! the Impiety of it startles me—to wrong so good, so fair a Creature, and one that lov'd you tenderly—'tis a barbarity of barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it—

*Mel.* But the greatest Villain imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the Villany of such a fact, is the Villany of aspersing me with the guilt. How? which way was I to wrong her? for yet I understand you not.

*L. P.* Why, gads my life, Cousin *Mellefont*, you cannot be so peremptory as to deny it; when I tax you with it to your face; for now Sir Paul's gone, you are *Corum Nobis*.

*Mel.* By Heaven, I love her more than life, or—

*L. P.* Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that, and every thing in the World, but give me Mathemacular Demonstration, answer me directly—but I have not patience—oh! the Impiety of it, as I was saying, and the unparallell'd wickedness! O merciful Father! how could you think to reverse Nature so, to make the Daughter the means of procuring the Mother?

*Mel.* The Daughter procure the Mother!

*L. P.* Ay, for tho' I am not *Cynthia*'s own Mother, I am her Father's Wife; and that's near enough to make it Incest.

*Mel.* Incest! O my precious Aunt, and the Devil in Conjunction.

[*Aside.*]

*L. P.* O

L. P. O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving every body ; Marrying the Daughter, only to make a Cuckold of the Father ; and then seducing me, debauching my purity, and perverting me from the road of Virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one Trip, not one *faux pas* ; O consider it, what would you have to answer for, if you should provoke me to frailty ? Alas ! Humanity is feeble, Heaven knows ! very feeble, and unable to support it self.

Mel. Where am I ? sure, is it day ? and am I awake, Madam ?——

L. P. And no body knows how Circumstances may happen together,——to my thinking, now I could resist the strongest Temptation,——but yet I know, 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or no, there is no certainty in the things of this life.

Mel. Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one question.——

L. P. O Lord, ask me the question, I'll swear I'll refuse it ; I swear I'll deny it,——therefore don't ask me, nay you shan't ask me, I swear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought all the Blood into my face ; I warrant, I am as red as a Turkey-Cock ; O fie, Cousin *Mellefont* !

Mel. Nay, Madam, hear me ; I mean——

L. P. Hear you, no, no ; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterwards : For one does not know how ones mind may change upon hearing——hearing is one of the Senses, and all the Senses are fallible ; I won't trust my Honour, I assure you ; my Honour is infallible and uncomatible.

Mel. For Heaven's sake, Madam.——

L. P. O name it no more——bless me, how can you talk of Heaven ! and have so much wickedness in your Heart ? May be you don't think it a sin,——they say some of you Gentlemen don't think it a sin,——may be it is no sin to them that don't think it so ;——indeed, if I did not think it a sin,——but still my honour, if it were no sin,——but then, to Marry my Daughter, for the Conveniency of frequent Opportunities,——I'll never consent to that, as sure as can be, I'll break the Match.

Mel.

*Mel.* Death and amazement,—Madam, upon my knees.—

*L. P.* Nay, nay, rise up, come you shall see my good Nature. I know Love is powerful, and no body can help his passion: 'Tis not your fault; nor I swear it is not mine,—how can I help it, if I have Charms? And how can you help it, if you are made a Captive; I swear it's pity it should be a fault,—but my honour——well, but your honour too——but the sin!——well but the necessity——O Lord, here's some body coming, I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your Crime; and strive as much as can be against it,—strive besure——but don't be melancholly, don't despair,—but never think that I'll grant you any thing; O Lord, no;—but besure you lay aside all thoughts of the Marriage, for tho' I know you don't Love *Cynthia*, only as a blind for your Passion to me; yet it will make me jealous,—O Lord, what did I say? Jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I must not Love you,—therefore don't hope,—but don't despair neither,—O, they're coming, I must fly. [*Exit.*]

*Mel.* (after a pause,) So then,—spight of my care and foresight, I am caught, caught in my security,—yet this was but a shallow artifice, unworthy of my Matchiavilian Aunt: There must be more behind, this is but the first flash, the priming of her Engine; destruction follows hard, if not most present!y prevented.

*Enter Maskwell.*

*Maskwell,* welcome, thy presence is a view of Land, appearing to my Shipwrack'd hopes: The Witch has rais'd the Storm, and her Ministers have done their Work; you see the Vessels are parted.

*Mask.* I know it; I met Sir *Paul* towing away *Cynthia*: Come, trouble not your head, I'll joyn you together e're to Morrow Morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

*Mel.* There's comfort in a hand stretch'd out, to one that's sinking; tho' ne'er so far off.

*Mask.* No sinking, nor no danger,—come, cheer up; why you don't know, that while I plead for you, your Aunt has given me a retaining Fee;—nay, I am your greatest Enemy, and she does but Journey-Work under me.

*Mel.* Ha! how's this?

*Mask.*

*Mas.* What d'e think of my being employ'd in the execution of all her Plots? Ha, ha, ha, by Heaven it's true; I have undertaken to break the Match, I have undertaken to make your Uncle Disinherit you, to get you turn'd out of Doors; and to— ha, ha, ha, I can't tell you for Laughing,— oh she has open'd her heart to me,— I am to turn you a Grazing, and to— ha, ha, ha, Marry *Cynthia* my self; there's a Plot for you.

*Mel.* Ha! O I see, I see my Rising Sun! Light breaks thro' Clouds upon me, and I shall live in Day— O my *Maskwell*! how shall I thank or praise thee; Thou hast outwitted Woman.— But tell me, how could'st thou thus get into her Confidence?—Ha! How? But was it her Contrivance to perswade my Lady *Plyant* to this extravagant belief?

*Mas.* It was, and to tell you the truth, I encouraged it for your diversion: Tho it made you a little uneasy for the present, yet the reflection of it must needs be entertaining. — I warrant she was very Violent at first.

*Mel.* Ha, ha, ha, I, a very Fury; but I was most afraid of her violence at last,— if you had not come as you did; I don't know what she might have attempted.

*Mas.* Ha, ha, ha, I know her temper, — well, you must know then, that all my Contrivances were but Bubbles; till at last I pretended to have been long Secretly in Love with *Cynthia*; that did my business; that convinced your Aunt, I might be trusted; since it was as much my interest as hers to break the Match: Then she thought my Jealousie might qualifie me to assist her in her Revenge. And, in short in that belief, told me the Secrets of her heart. At length we made this agreement, if accomplish her designs (*as I told you before*) she has ingaged to put *Cynthia* with all her Fortune into my Power.

*Mel.* She is most gracious in her Favour,— well, and dear *Jack*, how hast thou Contrived?

*Mas.* I would not have you stay to hear it now; for I don't know, but she may come this way; I am to meet her anon, after that I'll tell you the whole matter; be here in this Gallery an hour hence, by that time I imagine our Consultation may be over.

*Mel.* I will; till then, success attend thee.

[Exit.  
Mask.

*Mask.* Till then, Success will attend me ; for when I meet you, I meet the only Obstacle to my Fortune. *Cynthia*, let thy Beauty gild my Crimes ; and whatsoever I commit of Treachery or Deceit, shall be imputed to me as a Merit——Treachery, what Treachery ? Love cancels all the Bonds of Friendship, and sets Men right upon their first Foundations.

Duty to Kings, Piety to Parents, Gratitude to Benefactors, and Fidelity to Friends, are different and particular Ties : But the Name of Rival cuts 'em all asunder, and is a general acquittance—Rival is equal, and Love like Death an universal Leveller of Mankind. Ha ! but is there not such a thing as Honesty ? Yes, and whosoever has it about him, bears an Enemy in his Breast : For your honest man, as I take it, is that nice, scrupulous, conscientious Person, who will cheat no body but himself ; such another Coxcomb, as your wise man, who is too hard for all the World, and will be made a Fool of by no body, but himself : Ha, ha, ha. Well for Wisdom and Honesty, give me Cunning and Hypocrisie ; oh 'tis such a pleasure, to angle for fair-faced Fools ! then that hungry Gudgeon Credulity, will bite at any thing——Why, let me see, I have the same Face, the same Words and Accents, when I speak what I do think ; and when I speak what I do not think —— the very same —— and dear dissimulation is the only Art, not to be known from Nature.

*Why will Mankind be Fools, and be deceiv'd ?  
And why are Friends and Lovers Oaths believ'd ;  
When each, who searches strictly his own mind,  
May so much Fraud and Power of Baseness find ?*

*The End of the Second ACT.*

E

ACT

## ACT III. SCENE I.

*Enter Lord Touchwood, and Lady Touchwood.*

Ldy T. **M**Y Lord, can you blame my Brother *Plyant*, if he refuse his Daughter upon this Provocation? The Contract's void by this unheard of Impiety.

Ld. T. I don't believe it true; he has better Principles--- Pho, 'tis nonsense. Come, come; I know my Lady *Plyant* has a large Eye, and wou'd centre every thing in her own Circle; 'tis not the first time she has mistaken Respect for Love, and made Sir *Paul* jealous of the Civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned Pleasures.

Ldy T. You censure hardly, my Lord; my Sister's Honour is very well known.

Ld. T. Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little Trick wrought by some pitiful Contriver, envious of my Nephew's Merit.

Ldy T. Nay, my Lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: but that will require some time; for in such a Case as this, demonstration is necessary.

Ld. T. There should have been demonstration of the contrary too, before it had been believ'd---  
 Ldy T. So I suppose there was.

Ld. T. How! Where? When?

Ldy T. That I can't tell; nay, I don't say there was---  
 I am willing to believe as favourably of my Nephew as I can.

Ld. T. I don't know that. *[half aside.]*

Ldy T. How? Don't you believe that, say you, my Lord?

Ld. T. No, I don't say so--- I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his Defence.

Ldy T. His Defence! bless me, wou'd you have me defend an ill thing?

Ld. T. You believe it then?

Ldy. T. I

Ldy T. I don't know ; I am very unwilling to speak my Thoughts in any thing that may be to my Cousin's disadvantage ; besides, I find, my Lord , you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own : But since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 'tis a pain any longer to dissemble : I own it to you ; in short I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his charge—— Don't ask me my Reasons, my Lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

Ld. T. I'm amaz'd, here must be something more than ordinary in this. [*Aside.*] Not fit to be told me, Madam ? You can have no Interests, wherein I am not concern'd, and consequently the same Reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

Ldy T. But those which cause my disquiet, I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my Lord, don't press me.

Ld. T. Don't oblige me to press you.

Ldy T. Whatever it was, 'tis past : And that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented ; therefore let me beg you rest satisfied ——

Ld. T. When you have told me, I will ——

Ldy T. You won't.

Ld. T. By my Life, my Dear, I will.

Ldy T. What if you can't.

Ld. T. How ? Then I must know, nay I will : No more trifling —— I charge you tell me —— by all our mutual Peace to come ; upon your Duty ——

Ldy T. Nay, my Lord, you need say no more, to make me lay my heart before you, but don't be thus transported ; compose your self : It is not of Concern, to make you lose one minutes temper. 'Tis not indeed, my Dear. Nay, by this kiss you shan't be angry. O Lord, I wish I had not told you any thing. —— Indeed, my Lord, you have frighted me. Nay, look pleas'd, I'll tell you.

Ld. T. Well, well.

Ldy T. Nay, but will you be calm--indeed it's nothing but--

Ld. T. But what ?

E 2

Ldy T.

Ldy T. But will you promise me not to be angry — nay you must — not to be angry with *Mellefont* — I dare swear he's sorry — and were it to do again, would not —

Ld. T. Sorry, for what? 'Death you rack me with delay.

Ldy T. Nay, no great matter, only — well I have your promise — Pho, why nothing, only your Nephew had a mind to amuse himself, sometimes with a little Gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it look'd odly.

Ld. T. Confusion and Hell, what do I hear!

Ldy T. Or, may be, he thought he was not enough a-kin to me, upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a Lover you know, my Lord — Ha, ha, ha. Well but that's all — now you have it; well remember your promise, my Lord, and don't take any notice of it to him.

Ld. T. No, no, no — Damnation!

Ldy T. Nay, I swear you must not — a little harmless mirth — only misplac'd that's all — but if it were more, 'tis over now, and all's well. For my part I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope — for I have not heard any thing from him these two days.

Ld. T. These two days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural Villain! 'Death I'll have him stripp'd and turn'd naked out of my doors this moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous Brute!

Ldy T. O for Heaven's sake, my Lord, you'll ruine me if you take such publick notice of it, it will be a Town-talk: Consider your own and my Honour — nay, I told you you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

Ld. T. Before I've done, I will be satisfied. Ungrateful Monster, how long? —

Ldy T. Lord, I don't know: I wish my Lips had grown together when I told you — almost a Twelvemonth — nay, I won't tell you any more, till you are your self. Pray, my Lord, don't let the Company see you in this disorder — Yet, I confess, I can't blame you; for I think I was never so surpriz'd in my Life — Who would have thought my Nephew could have so misconstrued my Kindness — but will  
you

you go into your Closet, and recover your Temper. I'll make an excuse of sudden Business to the Company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my Lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all; will you my Lord?

Ld. T. I will——I am mute with wonder.

Ldy T. Well but go now, here's some body coming.

Ld. T. Well I go——you won't stay, for I would hear more of this. [Exit Ld. Touch.

Ldy. T. I follow instantly——So.

*Enter Maskwell.*

*Mask.* This was a Master-piece, and did not need my help——tho' I stood ready for a Cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion.

Ldy T. Have you seen *Mellefont*?

*Mask.* I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

Ldy. T. How does he bear his Disappointment?

*Mask.* Secure in my Assistance, he seem'd not much afflicted, but rather laugh'd at the shallow Artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your Plot, yet I would have you use Caution and Expedition.

Ldy T. Expedition indeed; for all we do, must be perform'd in the remaining part of this Evening, and before the Company break up; lest my Lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately——my Lord must not see him again.

*Mask.* By no means; therefore you must aggravate my Lord's Displeasure to a degree that will admit of no Conference with him.——What think you of mentioning me?

Ldy T. How?

*Mask.* To my Lord, as having been privy to *Mellefont's* design upon you, but still using my utmost Endeavours to dissuade.

diffuade him: 'Tho' my Friendship and Love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threatned the next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my Lord.

Ldy T. To what end is this?

*Mask.* It will confirm my Lord's opinion of my Honour and Honesty, and create in him a new Confidence in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming of another Plot that I have in my head ——— to cheat you, as well as the rest. [*aside.*]

Ldy T. I'll do it——I'll tell him you hindred him once from forcing me.

*Mask.* Excellent! your Ladyship has a most improving Fancy. You had best go to my Lord, keep him as long as you can in his Closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please; your Guests are so engaged in their own Follies and Intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

Ldy T. When shall we meet?——at eight this Evening in my Chamber; there rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth.

*Mask.* I will not fail.

[*Exit. Ldy Touchwood.*]

I know what she means by toying away an hour well enough. Pox I have lost all Appetite to her; yet she's a fine Woman, I lov'd her once. But I don't know, since I have been in a great measure kept by her, the case is alter'd; what was my Pleasure is become my Duty: And I have as little stomach to her now as if I were her Husband. Should she smoke my design upon *Cynthia*, I were in a fine pickle. She has a damn'd penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a Coldness the right way; therefore I must dissemble Ardour and Ecstasie, that's resolv'd: How easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before Fruition! Pox on't that a Man can't drink without quenching his Thirst. Ha! yonder comes *Mellefont* thoughtful. Let me think: Meet her at eight——hum——ha! by Heaven I have it——if I can speak to my Lord before——Was it my Brain or Providence? No Matter which——I will deceive 'em all, and yet secure my self, 'twas a lucky thought! Well this Double-Dealing is a Jewel,

## *The Double-Dealer.*

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Jewel,

[Maskwell pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks as it were to himself.

Here he comes, now for me——

*Enter Mellefont musing.*

Mercy on us, What will the Wickedness of this World come to?

*Mel.* How now, *Jack*? What so full of Contemplation that you run over!

*Mask.* I'm glad you're come, for I could not contain my self any longer: and was just going to give vent to a Secret, which no body but you ought to drink down.

Your Aunt's just gone from hence.

*Mell.* And having trusted thee with the Secrets of her Soul, thou art villainously bent to discover 'em all to me, ha?

*Mask.* I'm afraid my frailty leans that way---but I don't know whether I can in honour discover all.

*Mel.* All, all man, what you may in honour betray her as far as she betrays her self. No tragical design upon my Person I hope.

*Mask.* No, but it's a Comical design upon mine.

*Mel.* What dost thou mean?

*Mask.* Listen, and be dumb, we have been bargaining about the rate of your ruine ——

*Mel.* Like any two Guardians to an Orphan Heiress--well.

*Mask.* And whereas pleasure is generally paid with mischief, what mischief I shall do, is to be paid with Pleasure.

*Mel.* So when you've swallow'd the Potion, you sweeten your mouth with a plumb.

*Mask.* You are merry, Sir, but I shall probe your Constitution. In short, the price of your Banishment is to be paid with the Person of ——

*Mel.* Of *Cynthia*, and her Fortune —— Why you forget you told me this before.

*Mask.* No, no —— so far you are right; and I am, as an earnest of that Bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of---your Aunt.

*Mel.* Ha!----Pho, you trifle.

*Mask.* By

*Mask.* By this Light, I'm serious; all raillery apart——  
I knew 'twould stun you : This Evening at eight she will receive me in her Bed-Chamber.

*Mel.* Hell and the Devil, is she abandon'd of all Grace----  
Why the Woman is possess'd ——

*Mask.* Well, will you go in my stead ?

*Mel.* By Heav'n into a hot Furnace sooner.

*Mask.* No, you would not---it would not be so convenient, as I can order Matters.

*Mel.* What d'ye mean ?

*Mask.* Mean ? Not to disappoint the Lady I assure you---  
Ha, ha, ha, how gravely he looks —— Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contriv'd to make me capable of serving you, either to my Inclination or your own necessity

*Mel.* How, how, for Heaven's sake, dear *Maskwell* ?

*Mask.* Why thus —— I'll go according to Appointment ; you shall have notice at the critical minute to come and surprize your Aunt and me together : Counterfeit a rage against me, and I'll make my escape through the private passage from her Chamber, which I'll take care to leave open : 'twill be hard, if then you can't bring her to any Conditions. For this Discovery will disarm her of all Defence, and leave her entirely at your Mercy : nay, she must ver after be in one of you.

*Mel.* Let me adore thee, my better *Genius* ! By Heav'n I think it is not in the power of Fate to disappoint my hopes--my hopes, my certainty !

*Mask.* Well, I'll meet you here, within a quarter of eight, and give you notice.

*Mel.* Good Fortune ever go along with thee.

*Enter to him Careless.*

*Care.* *Mellefont*, get out o'th' way, my Lady *Plyant*'s coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in sight----tho' she begins to tack about ; but I made Love a great while to no purpose.

[*Mel.* Why

*Mel.* Why, what's the Matter? She's convin'd that I don't care for her.

*Care.* 'Pox I can't get an Answer from her, that does not begin with her Honour, or her Vertue, her Religion, or some such Cant. Then she has told me the whole History of Sir Paul's nine years Courtship; how he has lain for whole nights together upon the Stairs, before her Chamber-door; and that the first Favour he receiv'd from her, was a piece of an old Scarlet Petticoat for a Stomacher; which, since the day of his Marriage, he has, out of a piece of Gallantry, converted into a Night-Cap, and wears it still with much Solemnity on his anniversary Wedding-night.

*Mel.* That I have seen, with the Ceremony thereunto belonging - for on that night he creeps in at the Bed's Feet like a gull'd Bassa that has married a Relation of the *Grand Signior's*, and that night he has his arms at liberty. Did not she tell you at what a distance she keeps him. He has confess'd to me that but at some certain times, that is I suppose when she apprehends being with Child, he never has the privilege of using the familiarity of a Husband with his Wife. He was once given to scrambling with his hands and sprawling in his Sleep; and ever since she has him swaddled up in Blankets, and his hands and feet swath'd down, and so put to bed; and there he lies with a great Beard, like a *Russian* Bear upon a drift of Snow. You are very great with him, I wonder he never told you his Grievances, he will I warrant you.

*Care.* Excessively foolish — But that which gives me most hopes of her, is her telling me of the many Temptations she has resisted.

*Mel.* Nay, then you have her; for a woman's bragging to a man that she has overcome Temptations, is an argument that they were weakly offered, and a challenge to him to engage her more irresistably. 'Tis only an inhancing the price of the Commodity, by telling you how many Customers have underbid her.

*Care.* Nay, I don't despair --- but still she has a grudging to you --- I talk'd to her t'other night at my Lord *Froth's* Masquerade, when I'm satisfied she knew me, and I had no

reason to complain of my Reception ; but I find women are not the same bare-faced and in Masks, and a Vizor---disguises their Inclinations as much as their Faces.

*Mel.* 'Tis a mistake, for women may most properly be said to be unmask'd when they wear Vizors ; for that secures them from blushing, and being out of Countenance, and next to being in the dark, or alone, they are most truly themselves in a Vizor Mask. Here they come, I'll leave you. Ply her close, and by and by clap a *Billet doux* into her hand: For a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her, till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her. [Exit.]

*Enter Sir Paul and Lady Plyant.*

*Sir Paul.* Shan't we disturb your Meditation, Mr. *Careless* : you wou'd be private ?

*Care.* You bring that along with you, *Sir Paul*, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

*Sir Paul.* O, sweet Sir, you load your humble Servants, both me and my Wife, with continual Favours.

*Ldy P.* Jesu, *Sir Paul*, what a Phrase was there ? You will be making Answers, and taking that upon you, which ought to lie upon me : That you should have so little breeding to think Mr. *Careless* did not apply himself to me. 'Pray' what have you about you to entertain any bodies privacy ? I swear and declare in the face of the World I'm ready to blush for your Ignorance.

*Sir Paul.* I acquiesce, my Lady ; but don't snub so loud.

[*Aside to her.*]

*Ldy P.* Mr. *Careless*, If a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable return to those Obligations which you are pleased to conferr upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those Circumstances I'm sure I should rather attempt it than any thing in the World [*Curtesies*] for I'm sure there's nothing in the World that I would rather [*Curtesies*] But I know Mr. *Careless* is so great a Critick and so fine a Gentleman, that it is impossible for me--- *Care.*

*Care.* O Heavens ! Madam, you confound me.

*Sir Paul.* Gad's bud, she's a fine person —

*Ldy P.* O Lord ! Sir, pardon me, we women have not those Advantages : I know my own Imperfections — but at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the face of the World that no body is more sensible of Favours and Things for with the Reserve of my Honour, I assure you, Mr. *Careless* I don't know any thing in the World I would refuse to a person so meritorious — you'll pardon my want of Expression —

*Care.* O your Ladyship is abounding in all Excellence, particularly that of Phrase.

*Ldy P.* You are so obliging, Sir.

*Care.* Your Ladyship is so charming.

*Sir Paul.* So, now, now ; now my Lady.

*Ldy P.* So well bred.

*Care.* So surprizing.

*Ldy P.* So well drest, so boon mein, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easie, so free, so particular, so agreeable —

*Sir Paul.* Ay, so, so, there.

*Care.* O Lord, I beseech you, Madam, don't —

*Ldy P.* So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, Sir.

*Care.* For Heaven's sake, Madam---I'm quite out of Countenance.

*Sir Paul.* And my Lady's quite out of Breath ; or else you should hear---Gad's bud, you may talk of my Lady *Froth*.

*Care.* O fie, fie, not to be named of a day--my Lady *Froth* is very well in her Accomplishments---but it is when my Lady *Plyant* is not thought of---if that can ever be.

*Ldy P.* O you overcome me---that is so excessive---

*Sir P.* Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

*Care.* O, Sir *Paul*, you are the happiest man alive. Such a Lady! that is the envy of her Sex, and the admiration of ours.

*Sir Paul.* Your humble Servant, I am I thank Heaven in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my Neighbours, blessed be Provi-

dence---ay, truly, Mr. *Careless*, my Lady is a great Blessing, a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman as you shall see---if it becomes me to say so ; and we live very comfortably together ; she's a little hasty sometimes, and so am I ; but mine's soon over, and then I'm so sorry---O, Mr. *Careless*, if it were not for one thing---

*Enter Boy with a Letter, carries it to Sir Paul.*

Ldy P. How often have you been told of that you Jack-anapes ?

Sir Paul. Gad so, Gad'sbud---*Tim*. carry it to my Lady, you should have carry'd it to my Lady first.

Boy. 'Tis directed to your Worship.

Sir Paul. Well, well, my Lady reads all Letters first---Child, do so no more ; d'ye hear, *Tim* ?

Boy. No, an please you.

*[Carries the Letter to my Lady and Exit.*

Sir Paul. A humour of my wife's, you know women have little fancies--- But as I was telling you, Mr. *Careless*, if it were not for one thing, I should think my self the happiest man in the World ; indeed that touches me near, very near.

*Care*. What can that be, Sir Paul ?

Sir Paul. Why, I have, I thank Heaven, a very plentiful Fortune, a good Estate in the Country, some houses in Town, and some money, a pretty tolerable personal Estate ; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is Mr. *Careless*, that I have not a Son to inherit this --- 'Tis true I have a Daughter, and a fine dutiful Child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence I may say ; for indeed, Mr. *Careless*, I am mightily beholding to Providence-----a poor unworthy Sinner-----But if I had a Son, ah, that's my affliction, and my only affliction ; indeed I cannot refrain Tears when it comes in my mind.

*[Cries.*

*Care*. Why, methinks that might be easily remedied---my Lady's a fine likely Woman ---

Sir Paul,

*Sir Paul.* Oh, a fine likely Woman as you shall see in a Summers-day ——— indeed she is, *Mr. Careless*, in all respects.

*Care.* And I should not have taken you to have been so old ———

*Sir Paul.* Alas, that's not it, *Mr. Careless*; ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the mark a mile; indeed you do, that's not it, *Mr. Careless*; no, no, that's not it.

*Care.* No, what can be the matter then?

*Sir Paul.* You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you why my Lady is so nice ——— it's very strange, but it's true: too true ---- she's so very nice, that I don't believe she would touch a Man for the World ---- at least not above once a year; I'm sure I have found it so; and alas, what's once a year to an Old Man, who would do good in his Generation? indeed it's true, *Mr. Careless*, it breaks my heart ---- I am her Husband, as I may say, though far unworthy of that honour, yet I am her Husband; but alas-a-day, I have no more familiarity with her Person ---- as to that matter ---- than with my own Mother ---- no indeed.

*Care.* Alas-a-day, this is a lamentable story; my Lady must be told on't; she must i'faith, *Sir Paul*; 'tis an injury to the World.

*Sir Paul.* Ah! would to Heav'n you would, *Mr. Careless*; you are mightily in her favour.

*Care.* I warrant you, what we must have a Son some way or other.

*Sir Paul.* Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, *Mr. Careless*.

*Lady P.* Here, *Sir Paul*, it's from your Steward, here's a return of 600 Pounds; you may take fifty of it for your next half year.

*(Gives him the Letter.)*

*Enter Lord Froth, Cynthia.*

*Sir Paul.* How does my Girl? come hither to thy Father; poor Lamb, thou'rt melancholy.

*Ld. F.* Heav'n, *Sir Paul*, you amaze me, of all things in the World ---- you are never pleased but when we are all upon the broad grin; all laugh and no Company; ah, then 'tis such a fight

fight to see some teeth ---- sure you're a great admirer of my Lady *Whifler*, Mr. *Sneer*, and Sir *Laurence Loud*, and that gang.

Sir *Paul*. I vow and swear she's a very merry Woman, but I think she laughs a little too much.

Ld. *F*. Merry ! O Lord, what a character that is of a Woman of Quality ---- you have been at my Lady *Whifler*'s upon her day, Madam ?

*Cynth*. Yes, my Lord ---- I must humour this Fool. (*aside*.)

Ld. *F*. Well and how ? hee ! what is your sense of the Conversation there ?

*Cynth*. O most ridiculous, a perpetual consort of laughing without any harmony ; for sure, my Lord, to laugh out of time, is as disagreeable as to sing out of time or out of tune.

Ld. Hee, hee, hee, right ; and then my Lady *Whifler* is so ready ---- she always comes in three bars too soon ---- and then, what do they laugh at ? For you know laughing without a jest is as impertinent ; hee ! as, as ———

*Cynth*. As dancing without a Fiddle.

Ld. Just 'ifaith, that was at my tongues end.

*Cynth*. But that cannot be properly said of them, for I think they are all in good nature with the World, and only laugh at one another ; and you must allow they have all jests in their Persons, though they have none in their Conversation.

Ld. *F*. True, as I'm a Person of Honour ---- for Heaven's sake let us sacrifice 'em to mirth a little.

*Enter Boy and whispers Sir Paul.*

Sir *Paul*. 'Gads so ---- Wife, Wife, my Lady *Plyant*, I have a word.

Ldy. *Ply*. I'm busie, Sir *Paul*, I wonder at your impertinence ———

*Care*. Sir *Paul*, harkee, I'm reasoning the matter you know ; Madam, ---- if your Ladyship please, we'll discourse of this in the next Room. (*Ex. Careless and Lady Ply.*)

Sir *Paul*. O ho, I wish you good success, I wish you good success. Boy, tell my Lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below. (*Exit Sir Paul.*)

*Enter*

*Enter Lady Froth and Brisk.*

*Ldy. Froth.* Then you think that *Episode* between *Susan*, the Dairymaid, and our Coach-man is not amiss; you know, I may suppose the Dairy in Town, as well as in the Country.

*Brisk.* Incomparable, let me perish ---- but then being an Heroick Poem, had not you better call him a *Charioteer*? *Charioteer* sounds great; besides your Ladyship's Coach-man having a red face, and you comparing him to the Sun ---- and you know the Sun is call'd *Heav'n's Charioteer*.

*Ldy. F.* Oh, infinitely better; I'm extremely beholding to you for the hint, stay we'll read over those half a score lines again. *(pulls out a Paper.)* Let me see here, you know what goes before, the comparison, you know. *(Reads)*

*For as the Sun shines every day,  
So of our Coach-man I may say.*

*Brisk.* I'm afraid that simile wont do in wet Weather ---- because you say the Sun shines every day.

*Ldy. F.* No, for the Sun it wont, but it will do for the Coachman, for you know there's most occasion for a Coach in wet Weather.

*Brisk.* Right, right, that saves all.

*Ldy. F.* Then I don't say the Sun shines all the day, but, that he peeps now and then, yet he does shine all the day too, you know, tho' we don't see him.

*Brisk.* Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

*Ldy. F.* Well you shall hear ---- let me see.

*(reads)* *For as the Sun shines every day,  
So, of our Coach-man I may say,  
He shows his drunken fiery Face,  
Just as the Sun does, more or less.*

*Brisk.* That's right, all's well, all's well.

*Lady*

(Lady reads) *And when at night his labour's done,  
Then too like Heav'n's Charioteer, the Sun :*

Ay, *Charioteer* does better.

*Into the Dairy he descends,  
And there his whipping and his driving ends;  
There he's secure from danger of a bilk,  
His fare is paid him, and he sets in Milk.*

For *Susan*, you know, is *Thetis*, and so ———

*Brisk.* Incomparable well and proper, *Igad* ——— but I have one exception to make. ——— don't you think *bilk* (I know its good Rhime) but don't you think *bilk* and fare too like a Hackney Coach-man?

*Ldy. F.* I swear and vow I'm afraid so ----- And yet our *Jehu* was a Hackney Coach-man, when my Lord took him.

*Brisk.* Was that he then, I'm answered, if *Jehu* was a Hackney Coach-man---- you may put that into the marginal Notes, tho' to prevent Criticisms ---- only mark it with a small asterism, and say, ---- *Jehu* was formerly a Hackney Coach-man.

*Ldy. F.* I will; you'd oblige me extremely to write Notes to the whole Poem.

*Brisk.* With all my Heart and Soul, and proud of the vast honour, let me perish.

*Ld. F.* Hee, hee, hee, my Dear, have you done ---- wont you joyn with us, we were laughing at my Lady *Whifler*, and Mr. *Sneer*.

*Ldy. F.* ---- Ay my Dear ---- were you? Oh filthy Mr. *Sneer*; he's a nauseous figure, a most sulsamick Fop, Foh ---- he spent two days together in going about *Covent Garden* to suit the lining of his Coach with his complexion.

*Ld. T.* O silly! yet his Aunt is as fond of him, as if she had brought the Ape into the World her self.

*Brisk.* Who, my Lady *Toothless*; O, she's a mortifying Spectacle; she's always chewing the Cud like an old *Tew*.

*Cynth.*

*Cyn.* Fie Mr. *Brisk*, 'tis *Eringo's* for her Cough.

*Lady Fr.* I have seen her take 'em half chew'd out of her Mouth, to Laugh, and then put 'em in again——Foh.

*Lord Fr.* Foh.

*Lady Fr.* Then she's always ready to Laugh when *Sneer* offer to speak —— And sits in expectation of his no Jest, with her Gums bare, and her Mouth open. ——

*Brisk.* Like an Oyster at low Ebb, 'I gad——ha, ha, ha.

*Cyn.* (*Afide*) Well, I find there are no Fools so considerable in themselves, but they can render other People contemptible in exposing their Infirmities.

*Lady P.* Then that r'other great strapping Lady——I can't hit of her Name; the old fat Fool that Paints so exorbitantly.

*Brisk.* I know whom you mean——But Deuce take me, I can't hit of her Name neither——Paints de'e say? Why she lays it on with a Trowel——Then she has a great Beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plaistred with Lime and Hair, let me perish.

*Lady F.* Oh you made a Song upon her, Mr *Brisk*.

*Brisk.* He ?e'gad, so I did——My Lord can sing it.

*Cyn.* O good my Lord let's hear it.

*Brisk.* 'Tis not a Song neither——it's a sort of an Epigram, or rather an Epigrammatick Sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but it's Satyr.—Sing it my Lord.

S O N G.

*Ld. F. Sings.)* Ancient Phillis, *how* young Graces,  
'Tis a strange thing, but a true one;  
Shall I tell you how?  
She her self makes her own Faces,  
And each Morning wears a new one;  
Where's the Wonder now?

*Brisk.* Short, but there's Salt in't, my way of writing  
*I'gad.*

*Enter Footman.**Lady Fr.* How now?*Foot.* Your Ladiships Chair is come.*Lady Fr.* Is Nurse and the Child in it?*Foot.* Yes, Madam.*Lady Fr.* O the dear Creature! Let's go see it:*Lord F.* I swear, my Dear, you'll spoil that Child, with sending it to and again so often, this is the seventh time the Chair has gone for her to Day.*Lady Fr.* O-law, I swear it's but the sixth,—and I han't seen her these two hours.— The poor dear Creature——  
*I swear, my Lord, you don't Love poor little Sapho——*  
Come, my dear *Cynthia*, Mr. *Brisk*, we'll go see *Sapho*, tho' my Lord wont.*Cyn.* I'll wait upon your Ladiship.*Brisk.* Pray, Madam, how old is Lady *Sapho*?*Lady F.* Three Quarters, but I swear she has a World of Wit, and can sing a Tune already? My Lord wont you go? Wont you? What not to see *Saph*? Pray, My Lord, come see little *Saph*. I knew you cou'd not stay. [*Exeunt.*]*Cyn.* 'Tis not so hard to counterfeit Joy in the depth of Affliction, as to dissemble Mirth in Company of Fools—— Why should I call 'em Fools? The World thinks better of 'em; for these have Quality and Education, Wit and fine Conversation are receiv'd and admir'd by the World—— If not, they like and admire themselves—— And why is not that true Wisdom, for 'tis Happiness: And for ought I know, we have misapply'd the Name all this while, and mistaken the thing: Since*If Happiness in Self-content is plac'd,  
The Wise are Wretched, and Fools only Bless'd.* [*Exit.*]*The End of the Third ACT.*

ACT IV.

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ACT IV. SCENE I.

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*Enter Mellefont and Cynthia.*

*Cyn.* I Heard him loud as I came by the Closet-Door, and my Lady with him, but she seem'd to moderate his Passion.

*Mell.* Ay, Hell thank her, as gentle breezes moderate a fire ; but I shall counter-work her Spells, and ride the Witch in her own Bridle.

*Cyn.* It's impossible ; she'll cast beyond you still——  
I'll lay my Life it will never be a Match.

*Mell.* What ?

*Cyn.* Between you and me.

*Mell.* Why so ?

*Cyn.* My Mind gives me it wont——because we are both so willing ; we each of us strive to reach the Gole, and hinder one another in the Race ; I swear it never do's well when the Parties are so agreed——for when People walk hand in hand, there's neither overtaking nor meeting : We Hunt in Couples where we both pursue the same Game, but forget one another ; and 'tis because we are so near that we don't think of coming together.

*Mell.* Hum, 'gad I believe there's something in't ;——  
Marriage is the Game that we Hunt, and while we think that we only have it in view, I don't see but we have it in our power.

*Cyn.* Within reach ; for example, give me your hand ; why have you look'd through the wrong end of the Perspective all this while ; for nothing has been between us but our fears.

*Mell.* I don't know why we should not steal out of the House this moment and Marry one another, without Consi-  
deration

deration or the fear of Repentance. Pox o' Fortune, Portion, Settlements and Joyntures.

*Cyn.* Ay, ay, what have we to do with 'em; you know we Marry for Love.

*Mell.* Love, Love, down right very Villanous Love.

*Cynth.* And he that can't live upon Love, deserves to die in a Ditch——Here then, I give you my promise, in spite of Duty, any temptation of Wealth, your inconstancy, or my own inclination to change.——

*Mell.* To run most wilfully and unreasonably away with me this moment and be Married.

*Cyn.* Hold——Never to Marry any Body else.

*Mell.* That's but a kind of Negative Consent.—— Why, you won't baulk the Frolick?

*Cyn.* If you had not been so assured of your own Conduct I would not——But 'tis but reasonable that since I consent to like a Man without the vile Consideration of Money, He should give me a very evident demonstration of his Wit: Therefore let me see you undermine my Lady Touchwood, as you boasted, and force her to give her Consent, and then——

*Mell.* I'll do't.

*Cyn.* And I'll do't.

*Mell.* This very next ensuing hour of Eight a Clock, is the last Minute of her Reign, unless the Devil assist her in *propria persona*.

*Cyn.* Well, if the Devil should assist her, and your Plot miscarry.——

*Mell.* Ay, what am I to trust to then?

*Cyn.* Why if you give me very clear demonstration that it was the Devil, I'll allow for irresistible odds. But if I find it to be only chance, or destiny, or unlucky Stars, or anything but the very Devil, I'm inexorable: Only still I'll keep my word, and live a Maid for your sake.

*Mell.* And you won't die one, for your own, so still there's hope.

*Cyn.* Here's my Mother-in-Law, and your Friend Careless, I would not have 'em see us together yet. [Exeunt.

*Enter*

Enter Careless and Lady Plyant.

Lady Pl. I swear, Mr. *Careless*, you are very alluring — And say so many fine things, and nothing is so moving to me as a fine thing. Well, I must do you this justice, and declare in the face of the World, never any body gain'd so far upon me as your self, with Blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very foundation of my Honour — Well, sure if I escape your Importunities, I shall value my self as long as I live, I swear.

Care. And Despise me. (*Sighing.*)

Lady Pl. The last of any Man in the World, by my purity; now you make me swear — O Gratitude forbid, that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an intire resignation of all my best Wishes, for the Person and Parts of so accomplish'd a Person, whose Merit challenges much more, I'm sure, than my illiterate Praises can description.

Care. (*In a Whining Tone.*) — Ah Heavens, Madam, you ruine me with Kindness; your Charming Tongue pursues the Victory of your Eyes, while at your Feet your poor Adorer dies.

Lady Pl. Ah! Very fine.

Care. (*Still Whining.*) Ah why are you so Fair, so bewitching Fair? O let me grow to the ground here, and feast upon that hand; O let me press it to my heart, my aking trembling heart, the nimble movement shall instruct your Pulse, and teach it to allarm Desire. [*Zoons I'm*

*almost at the end of my Cant, if she does not yield quickly. (Aside.)*

Lady Pl. O that's so passionate and fine, I cannot hear it — I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

Care. And must you leave me! Rather let me Languish out a Wretched Life, and breath my Soul beneath your Feet.

[*I must say the same thing over again, and can't help it. (Aside.)*]

Lady Pl. I swear I am ready to Languish too — O my Honour! Whither is it going? I protest you have given me the Palpitation of the Heart.

Care.

*Care.* Can you be so cruel.——

*Lady Pl.* O rise I beseech you, say no more till you rise——Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported, I did not see it.——Well, to shew you how far you have gain'd upon me; I assure you if *Sir Paul* should die, of all Mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second choice.

*Care.* O Heaven! I can't out-live this Night without your favour——I feel my Spirits faint, a general dampness overspreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my Pores, and will to Morrow wash me for ever from your sight, and drown me in my Tomb.

*Lady Pl.* O you have Conquered, sweet, melting, moving Sir, you have Conquered——What heart of Marble can refrain to weep and yield to such sad Sayings.—(*Cries*)

*Care.* I thank Heav'n, they are the saddest that I ever said—Oh! [*I shall never contain Laughter. (Aside.)*]

*Lady Pl.* Oh, I yield my self all up to your uncontrollable Embraces——Say, thou dear dying Man, when, where, and how——Ah, there's *Sir Paul*.

*Enter Sir Paul and Cynthia.*

*Care.* 'Slife yonder's *Sir Paul*, but if he were not come, I'm so transported I cannot speak——This Note will inform you. (*Gives her a Note.*) [*Exit.*]

*Sir Paul.* Thou art my tender Lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt——But endeavour to forget this *Mellefont*.

*Cyn.* I would obey you to my power, Sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to Marry.

*Sir Paul.* Never to Marry! Heaven forbid; must I neither have Sons nor Grandsons? Must the Family of the *Plyants* be utterly extinct for want of Issue Male. Oh Impiety! But did you swear, did that sweet Creature swear! ha? How durst you swear without my Consent, ha? Gads-bud, who am I?

*Cyn.* Pray don't be angry, Sir, when I swore, I had your Consent; and therefore I swore.

Sir

*Sir Paul.* Why then the revoking my Consent does annul, or make of none effect your Oath : So you may unswear it again——The Law will allow it.

*Cyn. Ay,* but my Conscience never will.

*Sir Paul.* Gads-bud no matter for that, Conscience and Law never go together ; you must not expect that.

*Lady Pl. Ay,* but *Sir Paul*, I conceive if she has sworn, d'ye mark me, if she has once sworn : It is most unchristian, inhumane, and obscene that she should break it. —— I'll make up this Match again, because *Mr. Careless* said it would oblige him. (*Aside.*)

*Sir P.* Does your Ladiship conceive so——Why I was of that Opinion once too——Nay if your Ladiship conceives so, I'm of that Opinion again ; but I can neither find my Lord nor my Lady to know what they intend.

*Lady P.* I'm satisfied that my Cousin *Mellefont* has been much wrong'd.

*Cyn. (Aside)* I'm amazed to find her of our side, for I'm sure she lov'd him.

*Lady Pl.* I know my Lady *Touchwood* has no kindness for him ; and besides, I have been inform'd by *Mr. Careless*, that *Mellefont* had never any thing more than a profound respect——That he has own'd himself to be my Admirer 'tis true, but he never was so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable Notions of things ; so that if this be made plain——I don't see how my Daughter can in Conscience, or Honour, or any thing in the World.——

*Sir P.* Indeed if this be made plain, as my Lady your Mother says Child——

*Lady P.* Plain ! I was inform'd of it by *Mr. Careless*——And I assure you *Mr. Careless* is a Person——that has a most extraordinary respect and honour for you, *Sir Paul*.

*Cyn. (Aside.)* And for your Ladiship too, I believe, or else you had not chang'd sides so soon ; now I begin to find it.

*Sir P.* I am much obliged to *Mr. Careless* really, he is a Person that I have a great value for not only for that, but because he has a great veneration for your Ladiship.

*Lady P.* O las, no indeed, *Sir Paul*, 'tis upon your account.

Sir

Sir P. No I protest and vow, I have no title to his esteem, but in having the honour, to appertain in some measure, to your Ladiship, that's all.

Lady P. O law now, I swear and declare, it shan't be so, you'r too modest, Sir Paul.

Sir P. It becomes me, when there is any comparison made, between—

Lady P. O fy, fy, Sir Paul, you'l put me out of Countenance--- Your very obedient and affectionate Wife; that's all-- and highly honoured in that Title.

Sir P. Gads bud, I am transported ! give me leave to kiss your Ladiships Hand.

Cyn. That my poor Father, should be so very silly. (*Aside.*

Lady P. My Lip indeed, Sir Paul, I swear you shall. (*He kisses her, and bows very low.*

Sir P. I humbly thank your Ladiship—I don't know whether I fly on Ground, or walk in Air--- Gads bud, she was never thus before—Well, I must own my self the most beholden to Mr. Careless—As sure as can be this is all his doings—something that he has said ; Well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious Friend. Well, your Ladiship is of opinion that the Match may go forward.

Lady P. By all means--- Mr. Careless has satisfied me of the matter.

Sir P. Well, why then Lamb you may keep your Oath, but have a care of making rash Vows ; Come hither to me, kiss and Papa.

Lady P. I swear and declare, I am such a twitter to read Mr. Careless his Letter, that I can't forbear any longer—but though I may read all Letters first by Prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time.— Sir Paul.

Sir P. Did your Ladiship call ?

Lady P. Nay, not to interrupt you my Dear—only lend me your Letter, which you had from your Steward to day : I would look upon the Account again ; and may be increafe your Allowance.

Sir P. There it is, Madam ; Do you want a Pen and Ink ?  
(*Bows and gives the Letter.*

Lady Pl. No, no, nothing else I thank you, Sir Paul,  
———So now I can read my own Letter under the cover  
of his. [Aside.]

Sir P. He? And wilt thou bring a Grandson at 9 Months  
end——He? A brave Chopping Boy.——I'll settle a  
Thousand pound a Year upon the Rogue as soon as ever he  
looks me in the Face, I will Gads-bud. I'm overjoy'd to  
think I have any of my Family that will bring Children in-  
to the World. For I would fain have some resemblance of  
my self in my Posterity, he Thy? Can't you contrive that af-  
fair Girl? Do gads-bud, think on thy old Father; Heh?  
Make the young Rogue as like as you can.

Cyn. I'm glad to see you so merry, Sir.

Sir P. Merry, Gads-bud I'm serious, I'll give thee 500 L.  
for every inch of him that resembles me; ah this Eye, this  
Left Eye! A 1000 L. for this Left Eye. This has done Ex-  
ecution in its time Girl; why thou hast my Leer Hussey,  
just thy Father's Leer.——Let it be transmitted to the  
young Rogue by the help of imagination; why, 'tis the  
mark of our Family Thy; our House is distinguished by a  
Languishing Eye, as the House of Austria is by a thick Lip.  
——Ah! when I was of your Age Hussey, I would have  
held fifty to one, I could have drawn my own Picture——  
Gads-bud I could have done—not so much as you neither;—  
but——Nay, don't Blush——

Cyn. I don't Blush Sir, for I vow I don't understand.——

Sir P. Pshaw, Pshaw, you fib you Baggage, you do un-  
derstand, and you shall understand, come don't be so  
nice, Gads-bud don't learn after your Mother-in-Law my  
Lady here: Marry Heaven forbid that you should follow  
her Example, that would spoil all indeed. Bless us, if you  
should take a Vagarie and make a rash Resolution on your  
Wedding Night, to die a Maid; as she did. All were ru-  
in'd, all my hopes lost——My Heart would break, and  
my Estate would be left to the wide World, he? I hope  
you are a better Christian than to think of being a Nun; he?  
Answer me?

Cyn. I'm all Obedience, Sir, to your Commands.

H

Lady

*Lady Pl.* (*Having read the Letter*) O dear Mr. *Careless*, I swear he writes charmingly, and he talks charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charm'd me, as much as I have charm'd him; and so I'll tell him in the Wardrobe when 'tis Dark. — O Grimine! I hope, Sir Paul has not seen both Letters. [*Puts the wrong Letter hastily up, and gives him her own.*]  
*Sir Paul*, here's your Letter, to Morrow Morning I'll settle the Accounts to your Advantage.

*Enter Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Sir Paul, Gads-bud you're an uncivil Person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

*Sir P.* O Law, what's the matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. *Brisk*.

*Brisk.* Deuce take me I believe you intend to Marry your Daughter your self; you're always brooding over her like an Old Hen, as if she were not well hatch'd, I gad, he?

*Sir P.* Good strange! Mr. *Brisk* is such a Merry Facetious Person, he, he, he. No, no, I have done with her. I have done with her now.

*Brisk.* The Fiddles have stay'd this hour in the Hall, and my Lord *Froth* wants a Partner, we can never begin without her.

*Sir P.* Go, go Child, go, get you gone and Dance and be Merry, I'll come and look at you by and by. — Where's my Son *Mellefont*? [*Exit Cyn.*]

*Lady P.* I'll send him to them, I know where he is — [*Exit.*]

*Brisk.* Sir Paul, will you send *Careless* into the Hall if you meet him.

*Sir P.* I will, I will, I'll go and look for him on purpose. [*Exit.*]

*Brisk.* So now they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practice. — Ah! My dear Lady *Froth*! She's almost engaging

engaging Creature, if she were not so fond of that damn'd coxcomly Lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him Wit too, to keep in with him——No matter, she's a Woman of parts, and I'gad parts will carry her. She said she would follow me into the Gallery——Now to make my Approaches——Hem hem! Ah Ma- (*Bows.*) dam!——Pox on't, why should I disparage my parts by thinking what to say? None but dull Rogues *think*; witty Men like rich Fellows, are always ready for all Expences; while your Blockheads, like poor needy Scoundrels, are forced to examine their Stock, and forecast the Charges of the Day. Here she comes, I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own, hem!

*Enter Lady Froth.*

*Brisk Sings* *I'm sick with Love, ha ha ha, prithee come walking about. Cure me.*

*I'm sick with, &c.*

O ye Powers! O my Lady *Froth*, my Lady *Froth*! My Lady *Froth*! Heigho! Break Heart; God's I thank you. [*Stands musing with his Arms a-crofs.*]

*Lady Fr.* O Heavens Mr. *Brisk*! What's the matter?

*Brisk.* My Lady *Froth*! Your Ladyships most humble Servant;——The matter Madam? Nothing, Madam, nothing at all I'gad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole Province of Contemplation; That's all——(I'll seem to conceal my Passion, and that will look like Respect. [*Aside.*])

*Lady Fr.* Bless me, why did you call out upon me so loud?——

*Brisk.* O Lord I Madam! I beseech your Ladyship——when?

*Lady Fr.* Just now as I came in, bless me, why don't you know it?

*Brisk.* Not I, let me perish——But did I! Strange! I confess your Ladyship was in my Thoughts; and I was in

a sort of Dream that did in a manner represent a very pleasing Object to my imagination, but — But did I indeed? — To see how Love and Murder will out. But did I really name my Lady *Froth*?

Lady *Fr.* Three times aloud, as I love Letters — But did you talk of Love? O *Parnassus*! Who would have thought Mr. *Brisk* could have been in Love, ha ha ha. O Heaven's! I thought you cou'd have no Mistress but the Nine Muses.

*Brisk.* No more I have I gad, for I adore 'em all in your Ladiship — Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenatick, or airy upon't; the Deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your Ladiship has made the Discovery.

Lady *Fr.* O be merry by all means — Prince *Voscius* in Love! Ha ha ha.

*Brisk.* O barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! Yet, ha ha ha. The Deuce take me, I can't help laughing my self neither, ha ha ha; yet by Heavens I have violent passion for your Ladiship, seriously.

Lady *Fr.* Seriously? Ha ha ha.

*Brisk.* Seriously, ha ha ha. Gad I have, for all I Laugh.

Lady *Fr.* Ha ha ha! What d'e think I Laugh at? Ha ha ha.

*Brisk.* Me I gad, ha ha.

Lady *Fr.* No the Deuce take me if I don't Laugh at my self; for hang me if I have not a violent Passion for Mr. *Brisk*, ha ha ha.

*Brisk.* Seriously?

Lady *Fr.* Seriously, ha ha ha.

*Brisk.* That's well enough; let me perish, ha ha ha. O Miraculous, what a happy Discovery. Ah my dear charming Lady *Froth*!

Lady *Fr.* Oh my adored Mr. *Brisk*!

[Embraces.]

*Enter*

# The Double-Dealer.

53

*Enter Lord Froth.*

**Lord Fr.** The Company are all ready——How now!

**Brisk.** Zoons, Madam, there's my Lord. [*Softly to her.*

**Lady Fr.** Take no notice——But observe me——

Now cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the Room, and then joyn hands again; I could teach my Lord this Dance purely, but I vow Mr. *Brisk*, I can't tell how to come so near any other Man. Oh here's my Lord, now you shall see me do it with him. [*They pretend to*

*practise part of a Conntry-Dance.*

**Ld Fr.**——Oh I see there's no harm yet——But I don't like this familiarity. [*Aside.*

**Lady Fr.**——Shall you and I do our close Dance to show Mr. *Brisk*?

**Ld Fr.**——No, my Dear, do it with him.

**Lady Fr.**——I'll do it with him, my Lord, when you are out of the way.

**Brisk.** That's good I gad, that's good, Deuce take me I can hardly hold Laughing in his Face. [*Aside.*

**Ld Fr.** Any other time, my Dear, or we'll Dance it below.

**Lady Fr.** With all my heart.

**Brisk.** Come my Lord, I'll wait on you——My charming witty Angel! [*To her.*

**Lady Fr.** We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are Partners. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter Lady Plyant, and Careless.*

**Lady Pl.** O Mr. *Careless*, Mr. *Careless*, I'm ruin'd, I'm undone.

**Care.** What's the matter, Madam?

**Lady Pl.** O the unluckiest Accident, I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

**Care.** Heav'n forbid! What is it?

*The Double-Dealer.*

Lady Pl. I'm in such a fright ; the strangest Quandary and Premunire ! I'm all over in a Universal Agitation, I dare swear every Circumstance of me trembles. — O your Letter, your Letter ! By an Unfortunate Mistake, I have given Sir Paul your Letter instead of his own.

Care. That was unlucky. —

Lady Pl. O yonder he comes reading of it, for Heavens sake step in here and advise me quickly, before he sees.  
[Exeunt.]

*Enter Sir Paul with the Letter.*

Sir P. — O Providence, what a Conspiracy have I discover'd — But let me see to make an end on't. —

(Reads) Hum — *After Supper in the Wardrobe by the Gallery. If Sir Paul should surprize us, I have a Commission from him to treat with you about the very matter of Fact.* —

Matter of Fact ! Very pretty ; it seems then I am conducing to my own Cuckoldom ; why this is the very traiterous Position of taking up Arms by my Authority, against my Person ! Well, let me see — *Till then I languish in expectation of my Adored Charmer.*

*Dying Ned. Careless.*

Gadsbad, would that were Matter of Fact too. Die and be Damn'd for a Judas Maccabeus, and Iscariot both. O friendship ! What art thou but a Name ! Henceforward, let no Man make a Friend that would not be a Cuckold : For whomsoever he receives into his bosom, will find the way to his Bed, and there return his Caresses with interest to his Wife. Have I for this been pinion'd Night after Night for three Years past ? Have I been swath'd in Blankets till I have even been depriv'd of motion, and render'd incapable of using the common benefits of Nature ? Have I approach'd the Marriage Bed with reverence as to a sacred shrine, and deny'd my self the enjoyment of lawful Domestick Pleasures to preserve its Purity, and must I now find it polluted  
by

by Foreign Iniquity? O my Lady *Plyant*, you were Chaste as Ice, but you are melted now, and false as Water. — But Providence has been constant to me in discovering this Conspiracy; still I am beholden to Providence, if it were not for Providence, sure poor Sir *Paul* thy Heart would break.

Enter Lady *Plyant*.

Lady *Pl*. So Sir, I see you have read the Letter; — well now, Sir *Paul*, what do you think of your Friend *Careless*? Has he been Treacherous, or did *Snatches the Letter as in anger* — you give his insolence a License to make trial of your Wives suspected Vertue? De'e see here? Look, read it? Gad's my Life if I thought it were so, I would this moment renounce all Communication with you. Ungrateful Monster! He? Is it so? Ay, I see it, a Plot upon my Honour; your guilty Cheeks confess it; Oh where shall wrong'd Vertue fly for Reparation! I'll be Divorced this instant.

Sir *P*. Gads-bud, what shall I say? This is the strangest Surprise! Why I don't know any thing at all, nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the World, or no.

Lady *P*. I thought I should try you, false Man. I that never dissembled in my Life Yet to make tryal of you, pretended to like that Monster of Iniquity, *Careless*, and found out that contrivance to let you see this Letter; which now I find was of your own inditing. — I do Heathen, I do, see my Face no more; there has hardly been Consummation between us, and I'll be Divorced presently.

Sir *P*. O strange, what will become of me! — I'm so amazed, and so overjoy'd, so afraid, and so sorry. — But did you give me this Letter on purpose he? Did you?

Lady *P*. Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Sarazen? I have a Cousin that's a Proctor in the Commons, I'll go to him instantly. —

Sir

Sir P. Hold, stay, I beseech your Ladiship——I'm so overjoy'd, stay I'll confess all.

Lady P/. What will you confess, Jew?

Sir P. Why now as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this Letter——Nay hear me, I beseech your Ladiship: The Devil take me now if he did not go beyond my Commission——If I desired him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me; Gads-bud only for poor Sir Paul, I'm an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

Lady P/. Why is not here Matter of Fact?

Sir P. Ay, but by your own Vertue and Continency that matter of Fact is all his own doing. ——I confess I had a great desire to have some Honours Conferr'd upon me, which lie all in your Ladiships Breast, and he being a well spoken Man, I desired him to intercede for me.——

Lady P/. Did you so, Presumption! Well, remember for this, your Right Hand shall be swathed down again to Night ——and I thought to have always allow'd you that Liberty——

Sir P. Nay but Madam, I shall offend again if you don't allow me that to reach——

Lady P/. Drink the less you Sot, and do't before you come to Bed. [Exit.

*Enter Careless.*

Care. Sir Paul, I'm glad I've met with you, 'gad I have said all I could, but can't prevail——Then my Friendship to you has carried me a little farther in this matter——

Sir P. Indeed——Well Sir——I'll dissemble with him a little. [Aside.

Care. Why faith I have in my time known Honest Gentlemen abused by a pretended Coyness in their Wives, and I had a mind to try my Ladies Vertue——And when I could not prevail for you, 'gad I pretended to be in Love my self——but all in vain, she would not hear a word upon that Subject,

**Subject:** Then I writ a Letter to her ; I don't know what effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do, tho' by this Light I believe her Virtue is impregnable.

*Sir Paul.* O Providence ! Providence ! What Discoveries are here made ? Why, this is better and more Miraculous than the rest.

*Care.* What do you mean ?

*Sir Paul.* I can't tell you I'm so overjoy'd ; come along with me to my Lady, I can't contain my self ; come my dear Friend. *[Exeunt.]*

*Care.* So, so, so, this difficulty's over. *(aside.)*

*Enter Mellefont and Maskwell severally.*

*Mell.* Maskwell ! I have been looking for you — 'tis within a Quarter of Eight.

*Mask.* My Lady is just gone down from my Lords Closet, you had best steal into her Chamber before she comes, and lie conceal'd there ; otherwise she may Lock the Door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprize us.

*Mell.* He ? you say true.

*Mask.* You had best make haste, for she's but gone to make some Apology to the Company for her own, and my Lords absence all this while, and will to her Chamber instantly.

*Mell.* I go this moment : Now Fortune I defie thee. *[Ex.]*

*Mask.* I confess you may be allow'd to be secure in your own Opinion ; the appearance is very fair, but I have an After-Game to play that shall turn the Tables, and here comes the Man that I must Manage.

*Enter Lord Touchwood.*

*Ld. T.* Maskwell, you are the Man I wish'd to meet.

*Mask.* I am happy to be in the way of your Lordships Commands.

I

Ld.

*Ld. T.* I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concern'd me or my Family.

*Mask.* I were a Villain else—I am bound by Duty and Gratitude, and my own Inclination, to be ever your Lordship's Servant.

*Ld. T.* Enough—— You are my Friend ; I know it : Yet there has been a thing in your Knowledge, which has concern'd me nearly, that you have conceal'd from me.

*Mask.* My Lord !

*Ld. T.* Nay, I excuse your Friendship to my unnatural Nephew thus far—but I know you have been Privy to his impious Designs upon my Wife. This Evening she has told me all : Her good Nature conceal'd it as long as was possible ; but he perseveres so in Villany, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, though you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

*Mask.* I am sorry, my Lord, I can make you no Answer ; this is an Occasion in which I would not willingly be so silent.

*Ld. T.* I know you would excuse him—— and I know as well that you can't.

*Mask.* Indeed I was in hopes 'thad been a youthful Heat that might have soon boil'd over ; but——

*Ld. T.* Say on.

*Mask.* I have nothing more to say, my Lord—— but to express my Concern ; for I think his Frenzy increases daily.

*Ld. T.* How ! give me but Proof of it, Ocular Proof, that I may justify my Dealing with him to the World, and share my Fortunes.

*Mask.* O my Lord ! consider that is hard : besides, time may work upon him : then, for me to do it ! I have profess'd an everlasting Friendship to him.

*Ld. T.* He is your Friend, and what am I ?

*Mask.* I am answered.

*Ld. T.* Fear not his Displeasure ; I will put you out of his, and Fortune's Power, and for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy Fidelity to him, and give my Honour  
never

never to own any Discovery that you shall make me. Can you give me a demonstrative Proof? Speak.

*Mask.* I wish I could not——To be plain, my Lord, I intended this Evening to have try'd all Arguments to dissuade him from a Design, which I suspect; and if I had not succeeded, to have informed your Lordship of what I knew.

*Ld. T.* I thank you. What is the Villains Purpose?

*Mask.* He has own'd nothing to me of late, and what I mean now, is only a bare Suspicion of my own. If your Lordship will meet me a quarter of an Hour hence there, in that Lobby by my Lady's Bed-Chamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

*Ld. T.* I will.

*Mask.* My Duty to your Lordship, makes me do a severe Piece of Justice——

*Ld. T.* I will be secret, and reward your Honesty beyond your Hopes.

*Exeunt, severally.*

*SCENE* opening, shews Lady Touchwood's Chamber.

*Mellefont, Solus.*

*Melle.* Pray Heaven my Aunt keep touch with her Affigation——Oh that her Lord were but sweating behind this Hanging, with the Expectation of what I shall see——Hist, she comes——Little does she think what a Mine is just ready to spring under her Feet. But to my Post.

*(goes behind the Hanging.)*

*Enter Lady Touchwood.*

*Lady T.* 'Tis Eight a Clock: Methinks I should have found him here. Who does not prevent the Hour of Love; outstays the Time; for to be dully punctual, is too slow.——I was accusing you of Neglect.

*Enter Maskwell.*

*Mask.* I confess you do Reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

*Lady T.* You can excuse a fault too well, not to have been too blame—a ready Answer shews you were prepar'd.

*Mask.* Guilt is ever at a loss and confusion waits upon it, when Innocence and bold Truth are always ready for expression——

*Lady T.* Not in Love, Words are the weak support of Cold indifference; Love has no Language to be heard.

*Mask.* Excess of Joy had made me stupid! Thus may my Lips be ever clos'd. (*Kisses her.*) And thus — Oh who would not lose his Speech, upon condition to have Joys above it?

*Lady T.* Hold, let me Lock the Door first. [*Goes to the door.*]

*Mask.* (*aside.*) That I believ'd; 'twas well I left the private passage open.

*Lady T.* So, that's safe.

*Mask.* And so may all your Pleasures be, and secret as this kiss——

*Melle.* And may all Treachery be thus discovered.

(*Leaps out.*)

*Lady T.* Ah!

(*Shrieks.*)

*Mlle.* Villain!

(*Offers to Draw.*)

*Mask.* Nay then, there's but one way. (*Runs out.*)

*Melle.* Say you so, were you provided for an Escape? Hold, Madam, you have no more holes to your Burrough, I'll stand between you and this Sally-Port.

*Lady T.* Thunder strike thee Dead for this Deceit, immediate Lightning blast thee, me and the whole World— Oh! I could rack my self, play the Vulture to my own Heart, and gnaw it piece-meal, for not boding to me this misfortune.

*Mlle.*

*Melle.* Be Patient. —

*Lady T.* Be Damn'd.

*Melle.* Consider I have you on the hook ; you will but flounder your self a weary, and be nevertheless my Prisoner.

*Lady T.* I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

*Melle.* O Madam, have a care of dying unprepared, I doubt you have some unrepented Sins that may hang heavy and retard your flight.

*Lady T. O.* What shall I do? say? whither shall I turn? has Hell no remedy?

*Melle.* None, Hell has served you even as Heaven has done, left you to your self.—You're in a kind of *Erasmus* Paradise ; yet if you please you may make it a Purgatory ; and with a little Pennance and my Absolution all this may turn to good account.

*Lady T. (Aside)* Hold in my passion, and fall, fall, a little thou swelling Heart ; let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minutes coolness to dissemble. *(She Weeps.*

*Melle.* You have been to blame.—I like those Tears, and hope they are of the purest kind—Penitential Tears.

*Lady T.* O the Scene was shifted quick before me—I had not time to think—I was surpris'd to see a Monster in the Glass, and now I find it is my self ; Can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagined, but never put in practice—O Consider, Consider, how fatal you have been to me, you have already killed the quiet of this Life, the love of you, was the first wandering fire that e're misled my steps, and while I had only that in view, I ways betray'd into unthought of ways of ruine.

*Melle.* May I believe this true?

*Lady T.* O be not cruelly incredulous—How can you doubt these streaming Eyes? Keep the severest Eye o're all my future Conduct ; and if I once relapse, let me not hope forgiveness, 'twill ever be in your power to ruin me—My Lord shall sign to your desires ; I will my self create your Happiness, and *Cynthia* shall be this night your Bride—Do but conceal my failings, and forgive —

*Melle.*

*Melle.* Upon such terms I will be ever yours in every honest way.

*Enter Lord Touchwood, Maskwell softly behind him.*

*Mask.* I have kept my word, he's here, but I must not be seen. (*Exit.*)

*Lord T.* Hell and Amazement, she's in Tears.

*Lady T. (Kneeling)* Eternal Blessings thank you——Ha! my Lord listening! O Fortune has o'repaid me all, all! all's my own! (*Aside.*)

*Melle.* Nay, I beseech you rise.

*Lady T. (Aloud)* Never, never! I'll grow to the Ground, be buried quick beneath it, e're I be consenting to so damn'd a Sin as Incest! unnatural Incest!

*Melle.* Ha!

*Lady T.* O cruel Man, will you not let me go—I'll forgive all that's past——O Heaven, you will not ravish me!

*Melle.* Damnation!

*Lord T.* Monster, Dog! your Life shall answer this——

(*Draws, and runs at Melle. is held by Lady Touch.*)

*Lady T.* O Heavens my Lord! hold, hold, for Heavens sake.

*Melle.* Confusion, my Uncle! O the damn'd Sorcerers.

*Lady T.* Moderate your rage good my Lord! he's mad, alas he's mad——indeed he's my Lord, and knows not what he does——see how wild he looks.

*Melle.* By Heaven 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such Witchcraft.

*Lady T.* My Lord, you hear him—he talks Idly.

*Lord T.* Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to my Name; when next I see that Face, I'll write Villain in't with my Swords point.

*Melle.* Now, by my Soul, I will not go till I have made known my wrongs——Nay, till I have made known yours, which (if possible) are greater——Though she has all the Host of Hell her Servants; Though she can wear more shapes in shining

shining day, then fear shews Cowards in the dark——

*Lady T.* Alas he raves ! talks very Poetry ! for Heavens sake away my Lord, he'l either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

*Melle.* Death and Funes, will you not hear me—Why by Heaven she laughs, grins, points to your Back, she forks out Cuckoldom with her Fingers, and you're running Horn mad after your Fortune.

*(As she is going she turns back and smiles at him.)*

*Lord T.* I fear he's mad indeed—Let's send *Maskwell* to him.

*Melle.* Send him, to her.

*Lady T.* Come, come, good my Lord, my Heart akes so, I shall faint if I stay.

*(Exeunt.)*

*Me'l.* O I could curse my Stars, Fate, and Chance ; all Causes, and Accidents of Fortune in this Life ! but to what purpose ? yet, 'Ideath ; for a Man to have the fruit of all his Industry grown full and ripe, ready to drop into his mouth, and just when he holds out his hand to gather it, to have a sudden Whirlwind come, tear up Tree and all, and bear away the very root and foundation of his hopes ; What temper can contain ? They talk of sending *Maskwell* to me ; I never had more need of him—But what can he do ? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible design than this of his which has miscarried.——O my Pretious Aunt, I shall never thrive without I deal with the Devil, or another Woman.

*Women like flames have a destroying pow'r,  
Ne'er to be quench'd, till they themselves devour.*

SCENE shuts.

*[Exit.]*

End of the Fourth ACT.

## A C T. V. S C E N E I.

*Enter Lady Touchwood and Maskwell.**Lady T.* **W** Aft not Lucky ?*Mask.* Lucky ! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her intereft fo to be ; By Heaven I believe you can controul her power, and ſhe fears it ; though chance brought my Lord, 'twas your own art that turn'd it to advantage.*Lady T.* 'Tis true it might have been my ruine—but yonders my Lord, I believe he's coming to find you, I'll not be ſeen. *(Exit.)**Mask.* So ; I durſt not own my introducing my Lord, though it ſucceeded well for her, for ſhe would have ſuſpected a deſign which I ſhould have been puzzled to excuſe. My Lord is thoughtful—I'll be ſo too ; yet he ſhall know my thoughts ; or think he does——*Enter Lord Touchwood.**Mask.* What have I done ?*Lord T.* Talking to himſelf !*Mask.* 'Twas honeſt—And ſhall I be rewarded for it ? No, 'twas honeſt, therefore I ſhan't ;—Nay, rather, therefore I ought not ; for it rewards it ſelf.*Lord T.* Unequall'd Virtue ! *(Aſide.)**Mask.* But ſhould it be known ! then I have loſt a Friend ! He was an ill Man, and I have gain'd ; for half my ſelf I lent him, and that, I have recall'd ; ſo I have ſerved my ſelf, and what is yet better, I have ſerved a worthy Lord to whom I owe my ſelf.*Lord T.* Excellent Man ! *(Aſide.)**Mask.* Yet I am wretched—O there is a ſecret burns within this Breſt, which ſhould it once blaze forth, would ruine all, conſume my honeſt Character, and brand me with the name of Villain.*Lord*

*Ld. Touch.* Ha!

*Mask.* Why do I love! yet Heaven and my waking Conscience are my Witnesses, I never gave one working thought a vent; which might discover that I lov'd, nor ever must; no, let it prey upon my Heart; for I would rather die, than seem once, barely seem, dishonest:—— O, should it once be known I love fair *Cynthia*, all this, that I have done, would look like Rivals Malice, false Friendship to my Lord, and base Self-interest. Let me perish first, and from this hour avoid all sight and speech, and, if I can, all thought of that pernicious Beauty. Ha! but what is my distraction doing? I am wildly talking to my self, and some ill Chance might have directed malicious Ears this way.

[Seems to start, seeing  
my Lord.

*Ld. Touch.* Start not——let guilty and dishonest Souls start at the revelation of their thoughts, but be thou fix'd, as is thy Vertue.

*Mask.* I am confounded, and beg your Lordship's pardon for those free discourses which I have had with my self.

*Ld. Touch.* Come, I beg your pardon that I over-heard you, and yet it shall not need——Honest *Maskwell*! thy and my good Genius led me hither——mine, in that I have discovered so much Manly Vertue; thine, in that thou shalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand——my Nephew is the alone remaining Branch of all our ancient Family; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his room to be my Heir——

*Mask.* Now Heaven forbid——

*Ld. Touch.* No more——I have resolv'd——The Writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be sign'd, and have his name inserted——yours will fill the Blank as well——I will have no reply——Let me command this time; for 'tis the last, in which I will assume Authority——hereafter, you shall rule where I have Power.

*Mask.* I humbly would petition——

K

*Ld. Touch.*

*Ld. Touch.* Is't for your self? ——— [Mask. pauses.  
I'll hear of nought for any body else.

*Mask.* Then witness Heaven for me, this Wealth and Honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my Fortune on another's ruine: I had but one desire ———

*Ld. Touch.* Thou shalt enjoy it ——— if all I'm worth in Wealth or Interest can purchase *Cynthia*, she is thine. ——— I'm sure Sir *Paul's* Consent will follow Fortune; I'll quickly show him which way that is going.

*Mask.* You oppress me with Bounty; my Gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the weight, and cannot rise to thank you ——— What, enjoy my Love! Forgive the Transports of a Blessing so unexpected, so unhop'd for, so unthought of!

*Ld. Touch.* I will confirm it, and rejoyce with thee.

[Exit.

*Mask.* This is prosperous indeed ——— Why let him find me out a Villain, settled in possession of a fair Estate, and full fruition of my Love, I'll bear the railings of a losing Gamester—but shou'd he find me out before! 'tis dangerous to delay ——— let me think ——— shou'd my Lord proceed to treat openly of my Marriage with *Cynthia*, all must be discover'd, and *Mellefont* can be no longer blinded. ——— It must not be; nay, shou'd my Lady know it ——— ay, then were fine work indeed! her fury wou'd spare nothing, tho' she involv'd her self in ruine. No, it must be by Stratagem ——— I must deceive *Mellefont* once more, and get my Lord to consent to my private management. He comes opportunely ——— now will I, in my old way, discover the whole and real truth of the matter to him, that he may not suspect one word on't.

*No Mask like open Truth to cover Lies,  
As to go naked is the best disguise.*

*Enter Mellefont.*

*Mel.* O *Maskwell*, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into one another, and all ending in

in perplexity. My Uncle will not see, nor hear me.

*Mask.* No matter, Sir, don't trouble your head, all's in my power.

*Mel.* How? for Heaven's sake?

*Mask.* Little do you think that your Aunt has kept her word,—how the Devil she wrought my Lord into this dotage, I know not; but he's gone to Sir *Paul* about my Marriage with *Cynthia*, and has appointed me his Heir.

*Mel.* The Devil he has! what's to be done?

*Mask.* I have it, it must be by Stratagem; for it's in vain to make Application to him. I think I have that in my head that cannot fail: Where's *Cynthia*?

*Mel.* In the Garden.

*Mask.* Let us go and consult her, my life for yours, I cheat my Lord. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Lord Touchwood, Lady Touchwood.*

*L. Touch.* *Maskwell* your Heir, and Marry *Cynthia*!

*Ld. Touch.* I cannot do too much, for so much merit.

*L. Touch.* But this is a thing of too great moment, to be so suddenly resolv'd. Why, *Cynthia*? Why must he be Married? Is there not reward enough in raising his low Fortune, but he must mix his Blood with mine, and Wed my Niece? how know you that my Brother will consent, or she? nay, he himself perhaps may have Affections elsewhere.

*Ld. Touch.* No, I am convinced he loves her.

*L. Touch.* *Maskwell* love *Cynthia*, impossible!

*Ld. Touch.* I told you, he confess'd it to me.

*L. Touch.* Confusion! how's this!

[*Aside.*]

*Ld. Touch.* His humility long stifled his Passion: And his Love of *Mellefont* would have made him still conceal it,—but, by Encouragement, I wrung the secret from him; and know he's no way to be rewarded but in her. I'll defer my farther proceedings in it, till you have consider'd it, but remember how we are both indebted to him. [*Exit.*]

*L. Touch.* Both indebted to him! yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all, damn'd Villain! oh, I am

wild with this surprize of Treachery: Hell and Fire, it is impossible, it cannot be,—he Love *Cynthia*! what have I been Bawd to his designs? his Property only, a baiting place to stay his stomach in the road to her; now I see what made him false to *Mellefont*,——Shame and Destruction! I cannot bear it, oh! what Woman can bear to be a Property? To be kindled to a flame, only to light him to another's Arms; oh! that I were Fire indeed, that I might burn the vile Traytor to a Hell of Torments,——but he's Damnation proof, a Devil already, and Fire is his Element. What shall I do? how shall I think? I cannot think,—all my designs are lost, my Love unsated, my Revenge unfinished, and fresh cause of fury from unthought of Plagues.

*Enter Sir Paul.*

Sir P. Madam, Sister, my Lady Sister, did you see my Lady my Wife?

L. *Touch.* Oh! Torture!

Sir P. Gad'sbud, I can't find her high nor low; where can she be, think you?

L. *Touch.* Where she's serving you, as all your Sex ought to be served; making you a Beast. Don't you know that you're a Fool, Brother?

Sir P. A Fool; he, he, he, you're merry——no, no, not I, I know no such matter.

L. *Touch.* Why then you don't know half your happiness?

Sir P. That's a jest with all my heart, faith and troth,—but hearkee, my Lord told me something of a Revolution of things; I don't know what to make on't,——gad'sbud I must consult my Wife,——he talks of disinheriting his Nephew; and I don't know what,——look you, Sister, I must know what my Girl has to trust to; or not a syllable of a Wedding, gad'sbud——to shew you that I am not a Fool.

L. *Touch.* Hear me; consent to the breaking off this Marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me,  
and

and I'll renounce all Blood, all relation and concern with you for ever,——nay, I'll be your Enemy, and pursue you to Destruction, I'll tear your Eyes out, and tread you under my feet.——

Sir *P.* Why, what's the matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a joke, indeed——why, where's my Wife?

*L. Touch.* With *Careless*, in the close Arbour, he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

Sir *P.* O, if she be with Mr. *Careless*, 'tis well enough.

*L. Touch.* Fool, Sot, insensible Ox! but remember what I said to you, or you had better eat your own Horns, and Pimp for your living; by this light you had. *[Exit.*

Sir *P.* She's a passionate Woman, gad'sbud,——but to say truth, all our Family are Cholerick; I am the only peaceable Person amongst 'em. *[Exit.*

*Enter Mellefont, Maskwell, and Cynthia.*

*Mel.* I know no other way but this he has proposed; If you have Love enough to run the venture.

*Cynt.* I don't know whether I have Love enough,——but I find I have obstinacy enough to pursue whatever I have once resolved; and a true Female courage to oppose any thing that resists my will, tho' 'twere reason it self.

*Mask.* That's right,——well, I'll secure the Writings; and run the hazard along with you.

*Cynt.* But how can the Coach and six Horses be got ready without suspicion?

*Mask.* Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my Lord's own order.

*Mel.* How?

*Mask.* Why, I intend to tell my Lord the whole matter of our Contrivance, that's my way. .

*Mel.* I don't understand you.

*Mask.* Why, I'll tell my Lord, I laid this Plot with you, on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was

was, the finding it impossible to gain the Lady any other way, but in the hopes of her Marrying you.—

*Mell.* So. ———

*Mask.* So, why so, while you are busied in making your self ready, I'll wheedle her into the Coach; and instead of you, Borrow my Lords Chaplain, and so run away with her my self.

*Mell.* O I conceive you, you'll tell him so?

*Mask.* Tell him so! Ay, why you don't think I mean to do so?

*Mell.* No, no; ha, ha, I dare swear thou wilt not.

*Mask.* (*Aside*) You may be deceiv'd ——— Therefore, for our farther Security, I would have you Disguis'd like a Parson, that if my Lord should have Curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the Coach, but think the Cheat is carried on as he would have it.

*Mell.* Excellent *Maskwell*, thou wert certainly meant for a Statesman or a Jesuite, but that thou'rt too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

*Mask.* Well, get your selves ready, and meet me in half an hour, yonder in my Lady's Dressing-Room; go by the back Stairs, and so we may slip down without being observ'd.— I'll send the Chaplain to you with his Robes; I have made him my own, ——— and ordered him to meet us to Morrow Morning at *St. Albans*; there we will Sum up this Account, to all our satisfactions.

*Mell.* Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have. [Exit.]

*Mask.* Madam you will be ready?

*Cynt.* I will be punctual to the Minute. [going]

*Mask.* Stay, I have a doubt ——— upon second thoughts, we had better meet in the Chaplain's Chamber, here the corner Chamber at this end of the Gallery, there is a back way into it, so that you need not come thro' this Door ——— and a Pair of private Stairs leads down to the Stables ——— it will be more convenient.

*Cynt.* I am guided by you, ——— but *Mellefont* will mistake.

*Mask.* No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

*Cynt.*

Cynt. I will not fail.

[Exit.

Mask. Why, *qui vult decipi decipiatur*. — 'Tis no fault of mine, I have told 'em in plain terms, how easie 'tis for me to cheat 'em; and if they will not hear the Serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience, and future caution, — Now to prepare my Lord to consent to this. — But first I must instruct my little Levite, there is no Plot, publick or private, that can expect to prosper without one of 'em have a finger in't, he promised me to be within at this hour, — Mr. Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace. [Goes to the Chamber Door and knocks.

Mr. Saygrace, (looking out) Sweet Sir, I will but pen the last Line of an Acrostick, and be with you in the twinckling of an Ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an *Amen*, or before you can —

Mask. Nay, good Mr. Saygrace do not prolong the time, by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather if you please, defer the finishing of your Wit, and let us talk about our business, it shall be Tithes in your way.

Saygrace (Enters) You shall prevail, I would break off in the middle of a Sermon to do you pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater, — except — the business in hand — have you provided a Habit for Mellefont?

Sayg. I have, they are ready in my Chamber, together with a clean starch'd Band and Cuffs.

Mask. Good, let them be carried to him, — have you stitch'd the Gown Sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on?

Sayg. I have; the Gown will not be indued without perplexity.

Mask. Meet me in half an Hour, here in your own Chamber. When *Cynthia* comes, let there be no Light, and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from *Mellefont*. I'll urge haste, to excuse your silence.

Sayg. You have no more Commands?

Mask. None, your Text is short.

Sayg. But pithy, and I will handle it with Discretion. [Ex.

Mask. It will be the first you have so serv'd.

Enter

*Enter* Ld. Touchwood.

*Ld. Touch.* Sure I was born to be controuled by those I should Command: my very Slaves will shortly give me Rules how I shall govern them.

*Mask.* I am concern'd to see your Lordship discomposed—

*Ld. Touch.* Have you seen my Wife lately, or disobligh'd her?

*Mask.* No, my Lord. What can this mean? [*Aside.*]

*Ld. Touch.* Then *Mellefont* has urg'd some body to incense her—something she has heard of you which carries her beyond the bounds of Patience.

*Mask.* This I fear'd. (*aside*). Did not your Lordship tell her of the Honours you design'd me?

*Ld. Touch.* Yes.

*Mask.* 'Tis that; you know my Lady has a high Spirit, she thinks I am unworthy.

*Ld. Touch.* Unworthy! 'tis an ignorant Pride in her to think so—Honesty to me is true Nobility. However, 'tis my Will it should be so, and that should be convincing to her as much as reason—by Heav'n, I'll not be Wife-ridden; were it possible it should be done this night.

*Mask.* By Heav'n, he meets my wishes. [*Aside*]. Few things are impossible to willing minds.

*Ld. Touch.* Instruct me how this may be done, you shall see I want no inclination.

*Mask.* I had laid a small design for to morrow (as Love will be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your Lordship—but it may be as well done to night.

*Ld. Touch.* Here's Company—come this way and tell me.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter* Careless and Cynthia.

*Care.* Is not that he, now gone out with my Lord?

*Cynt.* Yes.

*Care.* By Heaven there's Treachery—the Confusion that I saw your Father in, my Lady *Touchwood*'s Passion, with what imperfectly I over-heard between my Lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's *Mellefont*? *Cynt.*

*Cynt.* Here he comes.

*Enter Mellefont.*

Did *Maskwell* tell you any thing of the Chaplain's Chamber?

*Mel.* No, my Dear, will you get ready—the things are all in my Chamber; I want nothing but the Habit.

*Care.* You are betray'd, and *Maskwell* is the Villain that I always thought him.

*Cynt.* When you were gone, he said his mind was chang'd, and bid me meet him in the Chaplain's Room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

*Mel.* How!

*Care.* There's *Saygrace* tripping by with a bundle under his Arm—he cannot be ignorant that *Maskwell* means to use his Chamber; let's follow and examine him.

*Mel.* 'Tis loss of time—I cannot think him false. [*Exeunt*

*Cynt.* My Lord musing!

*Mel. and Care.*

*Enter Ld. Touchwood.*

*Ld. Touch.* He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly design'd——yet he says he had prepar'd my Chaplain already.

*Cynt.* How's this! now I fear indeed.

*Ld. Touch.* *Cynthia* here; alone, fair Cousin, and melancholly?

*Cynt.* Your Lordship was thoughtful.

*Ld. Touch.* My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

*Cynt.* Mine were on Treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

*Ld. Touch.* Treachery concerning me! pray be plain——hark! what noise!

*Mask. (within.)* Will you not hear me?

*L. Touch. (within.)* No, Monster! Hellish Traitor! no.

L

*Cynt.,*

*Cynt.* My Lady and *Maskwell*! this may be lucky——  
My Lord, let me entreat you to stand behind this Skreen,  
and listen; perhaps this chance may give you proof of  
what you ne're could have believ'd from my suspicions.

*[They abscond.]*

*Enter Lady Touchwood with a Dagger, Maskwell.*

*L. Touch.* You want but leasure to invent fresh falshood,  
and sooth me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I  
will stab the Lie that's forming in your heart, and save a  
Sin, in pity to your Soul.

*Mask.* Strike then——Since you will have it so.

*L. Touch.* Ha! a steady Villain to the last!

*Mask.* Come, why do you dally with me thus?

*L. Touch.* Thy stubborn temper shocks me, and you knew  
it would——by Heav'n, this is Cunning-all, and not  
Courage; no, I know thee well: but thou shalt miss thy  
aim.

*Mask.* Ha, ha, ha.

*L. Touch.* Ha! do you mock my Rage? then this shall  
punish your fond, rash Contempt! Again smile!

*[Goes to strike.]*

And such a smile as speaks in Ambiguity!  
Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face,  
O! that they were written in thy heart,  
That I, with this, might lay thee open to my sight!  
But then 'twill be too late to know——

Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my Rage;  
Too well thou know'st my jealous Soul cou'd never bear  
Uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me——yet are you  
silent? Oh, I am wilder'd in all Passions! but thus my An-  
ger melts. *(weeps)* Here, take this Ponyard, for my very  
Spirits faint, and I want strength to hold it, thou hast dis-  
arm'd my Soul.

*[Gives the Dagger.]*

*Ld. Touch.* Amazement shakes me——where will this  
end?

*Mask.*

*Mask.* So, 'tis well——let your wild fury have a vent; and when you have temper, tell me.

*L. Touch.* Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

*Mask.* (*Aside*). Thanks, my invention; and now I have it for you.——First tell me what urg'd you to this violence? for your Passion broke in such imperfect terms, that yet I am to learn the cause.

*L. Touch.* My Lord himself surpriz'd me with the News, You were to marry *Cynthia*——that you had own'd your Love to him, and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

*Cynt.* How, my Lord?

*Ld. Touch.* Pray forbear all Resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

*Mask.* I grant you in appearance all is true; I seem'd consenting to my Lord; nay, transported with the Blessing—but could you think that I who had been happy in your lov'd Embraces, could ere be fond of an inferiour Slavery.

*L. Touch.* Ha! O poison to my Ears! what do I hear!

*Cynt.* Nay, good my Lord, forbear Resentment, let us hear it out.

*Ld. Touch.* Yes, I will contain, tho' I cou'd burst.

*Mask.* I that had wanton'd in the wide Circle of your World of Love, cou'd be confin'd within the puny Province of a Girl. No——yet tho' I doat on each last Favour more than all the rest; though I would give a Limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other Object of your Love; yet so far I prize your Pleasures o're my own, that all this seeming Plot that I have laid, has been to gratifie your taste, and cheat the World, to prove a faithful Rogue to you.

*L. Touch.* If this were true—but how can it be?

*Mask.* I have so contriv'd, that *Mellefont* will presently, in the Captain's habit, wait for *Cynthia* in your Dressing-Room: but I have put the change upon her, that she may be elsewhere employ'd—do you procure her Night-Gown, and with your Hoods tied over your face, meet him.

in her stead, you may go privately by the back Stairs, and, unperceiv'd, there you may propose to reinstate him in his Uncle's favour ; if he'll comply with your desires ; his Case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any Conditions,—— if not, here take this ; you may employ it better, than in the Death of one who is nothing when not yours.

[*Gives the Dagger.*]

**L. Touch.** Thou can'st deceive every body,——nay, thou hast deceiv'd me ; but 'tis as I would wish,——trusty Villain ! I could worship thee.——

**Mask.** No more,——there want but a few Minutes of the time ; and *Mellefont's* Love will carry him there before his hour.

**L. Touch.** I go, I fly, incomparable, *Maskwell* ! [Exit.]

**Mask.** So, this was a pinch indeed, my invention was upon the Rack ; and made discov'ry of her last Plot : I hope *Cynthia*, and my Chaplain will be ready, I'll prepare for the Expedition. [Exit.]

*Cynthia, and Lord Touchwood, come forward.*

**Cynt.** Now, my Lord ?

**Ld. Touch.** Astonishment binds up my rage ! Villany upon Villany ! Heavens, what a long track of dark deceit has this discover'd ! I am confounded when I look back, and want a Clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard of Treachery. My Wife ! Damnation ! my Hell.

**Cynt.** My Lord, have patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this discovery was not made too late.

**Ld. Touch.** I thank you, yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the Execution of their plots ;——ha, I'll do't, where's *Mellefont*, my poor injured Nephew,——how shall I make him ample satisfaction ?——

**Cynt.** I dare answer for him.

**Ld. Touch.** I do him fresh wrong to question his forgiveness ; for I know him to be all goodness,——yet my Wife ! Dam her,——she'll think to meet him in that Dressing-Room,——was't not so ? And *Maskwell* will expect you in the Chaplain's Chamber,——for once, I'll add to my Plot too,——let us haste to find out, and inform my Nephew,  
and

and do you quickly as you can, bring all the Company into this Gallery,—I'll expose the Strumpet, and the Villain.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter* Ld. Froth, and Sir Paul.

Ld. *Froth.* By Heaven's, I have slept an Age,—Sir *Paul*, what a Clock is't? past Eight, on my Conscience, my Lady's is the most inviting Couch; and a slumber there, is the prettiest amusement! but where's all the Company?—

Sir *P.* The Company, gad'sbud, I don't know, my Lord, but here's the strangest Revolution, all turn'd topsie turvy; as I hope for Providence.

Ld. *Froth.* O Heaven's, what's the matter? Where's my Wife?

Sir *P.* All turn'd topsie turvy, as sure as a Gun.

Ld. *Froth.* How do you mean? My Wife!

Sir *P.* The strangest posture of Affairs!

Ld. *Froth.* What, my Wife?

Sir *P.* No, no, I mean the Family,—your Lady's Affairs may be in a very good posture; I saw her go into the Garden with Mr. *Brisk*.

Ld. *Froth.* How? where, when, what to do?

Sir *P.* I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

Ld. *Froth.* How?

Sir *P.* Nay, only about Poetry, I suppose, my Lord; making Couplets.

Ld. *Froth.* Couplets.

Sir *P.* O, here they come.

*Enter* Lady Froth, Brisk.

Brisk. My Lord, your humble Servant; Sir *Paul* yours,—the finest night!

L. *Froth.* My dear, Mr. *Brisk* and I have been Star-gazing, I don't know how long.

Sir *P.* Does it not tire your Ladyship? are not you weary with looking up?

L. *Froth.*

*L. Froth.* Oh, no, I love it violently,——my dear you're melancholly.

*Ld. Froth.* No, my dear; I'm but just awake.——

*L. Froth.* Snuff some of my Spirit of Hartshorn.

*Ld. Froth.* I've some of my own, thank you, my dear.

*L. Froth.* Well, I swear, *Mr. Brisk*, you understood *Astronomy* like an old *Egyptian*.

*Brisk.* Not comparable to your Ladyship; you are the very *Cynthia* of the Skies, and *Queen of Stars*.

*L. Froth.* That's because I've no light, but what's by Reflection from you, who are the Sun.

*Brisk.* O *Jesu*! Madam, you have Eclips'd me quite let me perish.——I can't answer that.

*L. Froth.* No matter,——heark'ee, shall you and I make an Almanack together.

*Brisk.* With all my Soul,—your Ladyship has made me the Man in't already, I'm so full of the Wounds which you have given.

*L. Froth.* O finely taken! I swear, now you are even with me, O *Parnassus*, you have an infinite deal of Wit.

*Sir P.* So he has, gad'sbud, and so has your Ladyship.

*Enter Lady Plyant, Careless, Cynthia.*

*L. P.* You tell me most surprizing things; bless me who would ever trust a man? O my heart akes for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

*Care.* You need not fear, Madam, you have Charms to fix Inconstancy it self.

*L. P.* O-dear, you make me blush.

*Ld. Froth.* Come my dear, shall we take leave of my Lord and Lady?

*Cynt.* They'll wait upon your Lordship presently.

*L. Froth.* *Mr. Brisk*, my Coach shall let you down.

*All.* What's the matter?

[A great shriek from the corner of the Stage.

*Lady Touchwood runs out affrighted, my Lord after her, like a Parson.*

*L. Touch.* O I'm betray'd,——save me, help me.

*Ld. Touch.* Now what Evasion, Strumpet?

*L. Touch.*

L. Touch. Stand off, let me go, and Plagues, and Curses seize you all. *(Runs out.)*

Ld. Touch. Go, and thy own Infamy pursue thee,—— you stare as you were all amazed,—— I don't wonder at it,—— but too soon you'll know mine, and that Woman's shame.

*Enter Mellefont lugging in Maskwell from the other side of the Stage, Mellefont like a Parson.*

Mel. Nay, by Heaven you shall be seen,—— Careless, your hand; —— do you hold down your head? Yes, I am your Chaplain, look in the Face of your injur'd Friend; thou wonder of all Fallhood.

Ld. Touch. Are you silent, Monster?

Mel. Good Heavens! how I believ'd and Lov'd this Man!—— Take him hence, for he's a Disease to my Sight.

Ld. Touch. Secure that manifold Villain.

Care. Miracle of Ingratitude! *[They carry out Maskwell, who hangs down his head.]*

Brisk. This is all very surprizing, let me perish.

L. Froth. You know I told you Saturn look'd a little more angry than usual.

Ld. Touch. We'll think of punishment at leisure, but let me hasten to do Justice, in rewarding Virtue and wrong'd Innocence.—— Nephew, I hope I have your pardon, and Cynthia's.

Mel. We are your Lordships Creatures.

Ld. Touch. And be each others comfort; —— let me joyn your hands.—— Unwearied Nights, and wishing Days attend you both; mutual Love, lasting Health, and Circling Joys, tread round each happy Year of your long Lives.

*Let secret Villany from hence be warn'd;  
How e're in private, Mischiefs are conceiv'd,  
Torture and shame attend their open Birth:  
Like Vipers in the Womb, base Treach'ry lies,  
Still gnawing that, whence, first it did arise;  
No sooner born, but the Vile Parent dies.*

*[Exeunt Omnes.]*

## EPILOGUE: Spoken by Mrs. Mountford.

**C**ould Poets but foresee how Plays would take;  
Then they could tell what Epilogues to make;  
Whether to thank or blame their Audience, most:  
But that late knowledge, does much hazard cost, }  
Till Dice are thrown, there's nothing won, nor lost.  
So till the Thief has stol'n, he cannot know  
Whether he shall escape the Law, or no.  
But Poets run much greater hazards far,  
Than they who stand their Trials at the Bar;  
The Law provides a curb for 'its own Fury,  
And suffers Judges to direct the Jury.  
But in this Court, what difference does appear ! }  
For every one's both Judge and Jury here;  
Nay, and what's worse, an Executioner.  
All have a Right and Title to some part,  
Each chusing that, in which he has most Art.  
The dreadful men of Learning, all Confound,  
Unless the Fable's good, and Moral sound.  
The Vizard-Masks, that are in Pit and Gallery,  
Approve, or Damn the Repartee and Rallery.  
The Lady Criticks, who are better Read,  
Enquire if Characters are nicely bred;  
If the soft things are Penn'd and spoke with grace:  
They Judge of Action too, and Time, and Place;  
In which, we do not doubt but they're discerning,  
For that's a kind of Assignment Learning.  
Beaus Judge of Dress; the Witlings Judge of Songs;  
The Cuckoldom, of Ancient Right, to Cits belongs.  
Thus poor Poets, the Favour are deny'd,  
Even to make exceptions, when they're Try'd.  
'Tis hard that they must every one admit; }  
Methinks I see some Faces in the Pit,  
Which must of Consequence be Foes to Wit. }  
You who can Judge, to Sentence may proceed; }  
But tho' he cannot Write, let him be freed }  
At least from their Contempt, who cannot Read. }

FINIS.